

New Mission News

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the Grassroots report

By: D. Michael Spero

"Wild Bill" Sacks Mission High

Over 200 students, graduates, faculty, neighbors and friends of Mission High School addressed the Board of Education April 23, begging the Board not to let Superintendent Bill Rojas destroy their school. Speaker after passionate speaker, many fighting back tears, described the rapidly improving programs at Mission and told how the school had changed their lives. They demanded to know why Rojas was removing Principal Lupe Arabalos and Assistants Peter Long and Jan Hudson and reducing staff by over 15%.

I have never heard anything like this outpouring of love for school principals, normally not the most adored group in society. But these three work 12 hour days, constantly going out of their way to include each and every student in school life. Former student body president Latrice Simmons related how Arabalos came to her mother's funeral, and how Hudson arranged for her to go to Connecticut on the Summer Search program. Simmons and others said the Board was tearing down a foundation they had worked two years to create.

When the current administrative team came in 1994, Mission was known more for violence and drugs than for education. Now, student Felipe Hernandez told me, "I haven't seen a fight all year," and the vast majority of Mission grads go on to college. Mission has established partnerships with

cisco State, Kaiser, Bank of America, local neighborhood associations and others to create more opportunities for their students. Test scores have improved dramatically, and so has the school environment. Mission's dropout rate has dropped 90%, to less than 0.5%, an amazing statistic for an inner-city school. But the Mission High atmosphere is so supportive that most kids would rather be there than in the street.

"Lupe is always around, giving people hugs, telling them they're doing a good job," said security guard Mary Thomas, a Mission veteran. "I used to feel like wearing combat clothes to school, but now it's much more mellow. Students, teachers, everybody respects each other."

In spite of the school's gains, Rojas notified the administrators that their contracts would not be renewed. Under California law, administrators serve at the pleasure of the Superintendent. The Board has to sign off on the nonrenewals, which they did in closed session before anyone at Mission knew what was happening.

"This came as a big shock to me," said Luis Cruz, a 1993 grad, currently at UC Berkeley and pursuing a career in broadcasting. "[The administrators] have instituted major reform. I credit them with my academic success. Principal Arabalos is a great role model and a great asset to the Mission."

Cruz wasn't the only one shocked.

teers at Mission, said, "I don't understand this at all. Things here have improved so much." Neighbors also support the administrators. One, Eileen Gold, said that Mission students used to be seen as a nuisance or threat, littering and getting in trouble. Now, she said, they're a pleasure to be around. Another, Tisha Kenny of the 19th Street Neighborhood Association, told how students help clean their block, and said "What this administration is doing is what our youth are craving and calling out for."

Even Board members said they had been surprised. "I thought things were going along pretty well," said one, "hut Supt. Rojas told us we have put a lot of money into Mission and have not seen the results."

The District has put money into historically underfunded Mission in the last two years, although how much is in question. The District says \$2 million, but long-time Mission teacher Connie Flannery says more like \$800,000. Ten additional teachers were provided for 1995-96. With their help, Arabalos set up 9th and 10th grade "cores," where students stay together half the day with the same group of teachers, rather than wandering from class to class on their own. The core teachers hold meetings with kids, families and each other to help everyone succeed. The cored students have done far better than non-cored students on standardized tests.

No one questions that Mission students need extra help. They enter with the lowest family incomes and English-language proficiency of any student body in SF. Many are immigrants who have had little education before reaching Mission. As a result, their California Test of Basic

Skills (CTBS) scores are the lowest in town, about 10% lower than Balboa, the next lowest school.

According to Gail Kaufman of the School District, Rojas wanted faster improvement in those scores. She couldn't give scores from previous years for comparison, nor could she name a school that was improving faster. Rojas himself rarely speaks with administrators, parents, or the press, and in any case, said Kaufman, "It's a personnel matter, and we can't comment publicly."

Last week, Rojas piled on Mission with a 96-97 budget that cuts 16 teaching positions, reducing the faculty to pre-1994 poverty levels, signaling an end to the coring and Mission's other successful experiments. Rumors, strongly denied by Kaufman, are flying that Mission will be reconstituted, meaning replacement of the entire staff and program. Some Mission activists suspect Rojas and allies like Board member Carlota del Portillo want the Mission jobs for their own supporters. Whether his reasons are political or educational, Rojas has done something unforgivably vicious to hundreds of vulnerable Mission High students, arbitrarily removing their support systems in a cruel world.

Can Mission get its administrators and funding back? Rojas, who has the final say, sat through the emotional testimony with an "I've heard it all before," look, and Board President Steve Phillips responded to the speakers with a short "thank you for your input" blow-off. But some of the other Board members appeared to be listening. To support Mission High, write the Board and Superintendent Rojas at 135 Van Ness Avenue, SF, CA 94102 and call them at 241-6000.

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Da Column

by Willie L. Brown Jr.

Say YES



I learned my first lessons about working with others as a 12-year-old shoeshine boy in my home town of Mineola, Texas. I learned the value of earning money by working hard. I learned the raw mechanics of business, how to carry myself in a professional manner, and how to be persuasive -- after all, part of my income came from tips!

As a teen, I moved to the Bay Area to attend college. Although my segregated primary education failed to prepare me for higher learning, those formative early employment experiences did. I understood achievement, and after meeting the right mentor I went on to succeed at San Francisco State University and Hastings Law School.

I had other summer and year-round jobs along the way. And although many doors were closed to educated young black men during the '50s and '60s, as my education advanced the opportunities expanded. I carried away important life lessons from each new employment opportunity.

Jobs are a key part of any kid's education, but especially important for low-income youths who often lack the professional links into full time, professional employment. These youths are expected to contribute to the family income.

Each year the city of San Francisco receives approximately \$3.3 million from the federal government to implement the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP). This program provides jobs for more than 2,800 youths in San Francisco. SYETP targets youths ages 14-21 from low-income families. Many of these young people do not have role models who work. Many also lack the experience and skills necessary to get a job on their own.

Through SYETP, these youths gain experience that gives them the structure and support they need in order to succeed at their first employment experience. Local community-based organizations and the San Francisco Unified School District recruit and place these kids in nonprofit organizations and public sector agencies throughout the city in entry level

jobs such as clerical assistants and library aides.

One example is 17-year-old Asanti from Bayview Hunters Point. A senior at Burton High School, Asanti currently works part-time at the Young Community Developers, a program that serves youths in her neighborhood. Asanti has worked as a child care assistant and a teacher's aide, helping care for children with disabilities. Through her experience she has gained a new appreciation of her own skills and is contributing to her neighborhood at the same time.

Unfortunately, future experiences for youths like Asanti are in danger. Congress has slashed funding for the SYETP program by more than 25 percent, resulting in the loss of 700 job opportunities for low-income San Francisco youth.

Therefore, it is time for San Francisco to step to the plate.

Working with Supervisor Michael Yaki and local business leaders, I have launched Say YES (Youth Employment for the Summer), a campaign to raise money and jobs to save the Summer Youth Employment Program.

One goal is to raise \$600,000 in money and jobs to employ 700 youths. We need to raise the money by the end of the school year in mid-June. So far, area businesses have stepped up to the plate. They include: Charles Schwab & Company, the Small Business Network, Just Desserts, Nestle, Gannett, and the San Francisco Giants and 49ers, to name a few.

You can join the campaign by contributing to Say YES or by offering employment to a young person. By contributing you will be providing many youths with their first experience in the world of work. Like the tips I earned shining shoes, the tips these kids learn will never be wasted because they come in the form of life-enriching employment experience.

Contribute to the Say YES campaign by calling (415) 861-JOBS (861-5627) or by mailing a check to Say YES c/o the Private Industry Council, 745 Franklin Street, Suite 400, San Francisco 94102-3117.

Peace Here, Peace Now Bay Area Walkathon Set For June 1st

Youth Organize Anti-violence Event

by Victor Miller

On June 1, thousands of people dedicated to peace in Bay Area communities will converge on the Yerba Buena Center for the First Annual Bay Area Peace Walkathon, led by Mayor Willie Brown.

Edward James Olmos and Danny Glover are invited guests. Entertainment will include Hoopla, Backdraft, the Lovely Dancers from Heaven, and surprise guests.

This important event is notable because it is youth-organized. Teenagers and young adults began early this year going to schools, community organizations, and businesses to secure pledges of support for Walkathon.

San Francisco streets have been the scene of massive marches for peace in Vietnam, El Salvador, and countless other places thousands of miles away, but this will be the Bay Area's largest demonstration for peace here at home.

Young people live not only with personal tragedy when their friends, brothers, and sisters die violent deaths, but also with the burden of society's blame. The media have been particularly relentless in coverage of drive-bys, gang fights, muggings, and stabbings. The many positive things teenagers and young adults do every day in their schools and neighborhoods have been under-reported, or sometimes not reported at all.

For example, last year's Mission District Youth Summit drew nearly 300 participants but received no coverage in either of San Francisco's two daily or two

weekly newspapers, or in Bay Area television or radio.

The public has been given the impression that youth, especially youth of color, are violent and worthless. What's worse, these negative images reinforce doubts and fears common to anyone growing up. Constantly being told they are violent, some will accept that definition and act accordingly.

The Walkathon intends to break this vicious cycle in two ways. First, the planning and organization of an event of this scale serve as eloquent testimony to the untapped positive energy and capabilities of youth. This event comes directly at the urging of many Mission District youth working with the Community Peace Initiative. "They constantly pushed me to do this event. It came from them," said CPI director Anthony Ceja.

The Walkathon will be a measure of the success of young people in countering the role model offered by a few gang members -- magnified a thousandfold in the press and on TV. New leadership and new role models reflecting the positive characteristics of youth will evolve in the course of putting the Walkathon together. Coming as it does at the very beginning of summer, when the risk of youth violence is high, the Walkathon is extremely timely.

Secondly, the Walkathon will demonstrate on a scale that cannot be ignored the commitment of the overwhelming majority of youth to peace. This is a very real and a very deep commitment that for a long time has needed some substantial expression.

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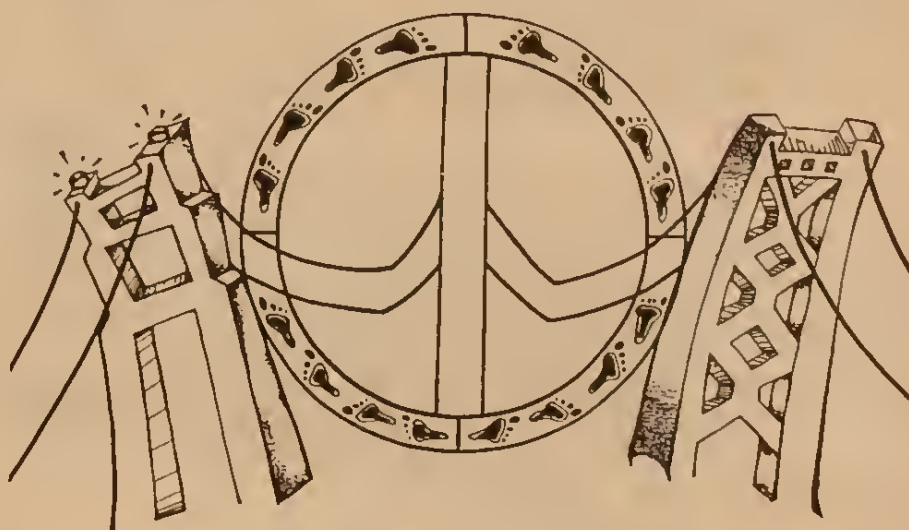


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12 noon - 4 p.m. Food, speakers, and music

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mission broadsider

by andy solow

Park Funds Go Nowhere

Funding for four million dollars' worth of Mission open space projects has been available for several years, but only one of those projects, the renovation of Alioto Mini-Park, has been completed. The following is an update on the remaining projects.

Dolores Park Soccer Field

After holding at least 17 public hearings and expending more than \$270,000, the great city of San Francisco has yet to produce a usable soccer field in Dolores Park. The Department of Public Works actually approved the defective field at the end of 1995 in spite of large holes, mud bogs, standing water, and a host of other obvious flaws.

At that time, representatives from the Mission Youth Soccer League (MYSL), the California Youth Soccer Association (CYSA), and Federation International de Football (FIFA) held a press conference in Dolores Park during which FIFA Assessor, Fernando Alvarez (the second highest ranking FIFA official in North America) called the people who built the field "criminales."

The responsible parties were subsequently vilified in the media. Supervisor Susan Leal held several hearings before

the Board of Supervisors, and DPW and the Recreation and Park Department admitted that the field was a lemon and agreed to repair it.

Meanwhile, in addition to the \$185,000 they have already received, Angotti & Reilly, the main contractor on the job, has been trying to collect more than \$40,000 additional dollars for "extra" work they performed on the field. Needless to say, not only are they not likely to collect the \$40,000, according to DPW manager Todd Cockburn, Angotti & Reilly might have to return part of the money they were already paid because they failed to complete the contract.

According to Jim Lucey, Assistant Superintendent of Structural Maintenance for the Recreation and Park Department, during the next few months the city plans to rototill and regrade the entire 60,000 square foot field, add some underground drainage pipes, and then cover the whole thing with Bermuda Grass Sod. According to Park Planner and project manager Joanne Wilson, the Dolores Park Soccer Field should be completed and ready for use by September of 1996.

But, I wouldn't hold my breath. A September completion date would only allow 30 days for the sod to take root. During three recent meetings that included the Parks and Recreation, DPW, and the soc-

cer community, all parties agreed that the proper establishment time for Bermuda sod in an open area with unrestricted access and virtually continuous use is 90 days minimum. Thus, the field will probably not be completed and ready for use before November 1996.

23rd & Treat Street Park

This project was proposed more than five years ago by the Calle 22 Neighborhood Organization and has been fully funded for more than two years. Unfortunately, due to the presence of toxic contaminants on the site and the ensuing argument about the value of the contaminated property, acquisition and development of the 23rd and Treat Street Park has been on hold since February 1995.

According to Harry Quinn, Assistant Director of the San Francisco Real Estate Department, toxics testing indicated that the 23rd and Treat Street site is contaminated with lead from 1906 earthquake debris and with hydrocarbons left over from two leaking underground fuel tanks that were removed from the site in 1992. Quinn says that the city and the seller have agreed on a base price for clean land, but they are still haggling over the fair market value of the land minus the toxic contaminants. Unfortunately, the parties are still several hundred thousand dollars apart and there is still no sales agreement or completion date for this project.

Jose Coronado Playground

In September of 1991, the community submitted a renovation plan for Jose Coronado Playground to the Open Space Committee. The community's request was

approved and funds have been available since the fall of 1992. In October of 1994, after considerable arm twisting, the Recreation and Park Commission rejected the staff recommendation and approved the community's renovation plan for Jose Coronado (JC) Playground.

Even though this project has been fully funded for more than three years, the first spoonful of earth has yet to be turned. According to Park Planner Joanne Wilson, the 50% drawings have been completed and approved by the community. However, before work can proceed the project must be approved by the Arts Commission, building permits must be issued, and a contractor must be selected. Wilson predicted that construction would start by the end of 1996.

Before it's over, the city will have spent more than seven years and close to \$500,000 to design and construct a recreation room, a bathroom, an office, and a new play structure for JC Playground.

Mission Rec Center Children's Playground

One year ago, Tim Lilliquist, Assistant to the General Manager of the Recreation and Park Department, told me that by July 1, 1995, the empty lot adjacent to the Mission Recreation Center would be paved and fenced, a \$100,000 artificial turf mini-soccer field (donated by Adidas Corp. on behalf of the Mission Youth Soccer League) would be installed, and access to the paved open space and the soccer field would be provided directly from inside Mission Rec Center by cutting a door into the building's south wall.

In July 1995, Lilliquist indicated that the target completion date had been pushed back to December 1995 "unless other emergencies arose." Well, now it's April 1996, and even though the mini-soccer field has been ready for nearly a year, the handicapped ramp between Mission Rec and the new playground and mini-soccer field is still not completed. And the new facility is still closed.

According to Jim Lucey the ramp will be completed by June 1, 1996. However, Lucey also indicated that there is nothing to prevent the Recreation and Park Department from allowing temporary access to the mini-soccer field directly from the street. Lucey suggested that the department put the facility into service immediately and provide extra supervision until the ramp is completed and access can be restricted to people entering through Mission Rec Center.

Mission Playground

Through the efforts of the Mission Playground Association, both Open Space and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were allocated to pay for the renovation of the children's play area at the Mission Playground more than three years ago. Unfortunately, the CDBG funds were rescinded in 1995 after the Alioto Mini-Park prevailing wage debacle. However, according to Park Planner Deborah Learner, a \$175,000 supplemental allocation from the 1996-1997 Open Space budget sufficient to complete this project will be available in August of 1996 and construction should begin by the end of this year.

Franklin Soccer Field

Funding for this project was approved back in 1994. The construction contract was recently awarded to Bauman Landscaping, and construction will start in mid-May of 1996. The field should be completed and ready for use by October 1996.

This \$700,000 dollar renovation project will include removal of old declining trees and substantial grading to make the soccer field larger; relocation of the existing bathroom; installation of irrigation, drainage, new soil, and turf; and addition of handicapped access and some new fencing. Field lighting is not included.

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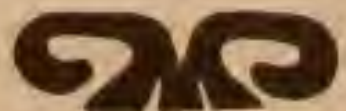
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GUEST OPINION

HIDDEN AGENDA

by Peter Byrne and Marie Harrison

This is a response to the April 1996 *New Mission News* article, "The Fall and Rise of Bernal Dwellings," by Barbara Meskunas, a policy analyst for the Institute for Contemporary Studies and recent Housing Authority Commission president.

Meskunas sings the praises of HUD's HOPE IV public housing demolition program. HUD recently disbanded the inept Housing Authority Commission, partly because it made such a hash of HOPE IV.

Seventy-two million HOPE IV dollars for "re-inventing" Bernal Dwellings, Plaza East, and Hayes Valley housing projects are being funneled to out-of-town private real-estate developers such as McCormack Baron, Inc. (Missouri), Related Companies, Inc. (New York), and Sun-America, Inc. (Los Angeles).

The 2500 families currently residing in the projects at Hayes Valley, Bernal Dwellings, and Plaza East, as well as North Beach, Potrero Hill and Sunnydale, which are also on the chopping block, will not find replacement housing in San Francisco.

They will not be able to return to the neighborhoods where they grew up, worked, raised children, and buried their dead.

At Hayes Valley, 294 units of destroyed public housing will be "replaced" by "mixed-income housing" containing as few as 39 units available for public housing.

The bottom line is that black people are being driven out of San Francisco as gentrification sweeps the city. The residents of the above projects represent about 14 percent of the remaining African American population of 70,000.

The corporate flunkies in the media have been wildly promoting the mistaken

idea that public housing tenants have destroyed the quality of life in the projects. In fact, Housing and HUD sat idly by for decades watching the projects physically rot while they handed billions to consultants and contractors to "modernize" them.

The \$7 billion that HUD disburses annually to America's 3000 Housing Authorities has not been spent on professional property management activities. For San Francisco's \$100 million a year share, our 6700 public housing units ought to rival the opulence of Willie Brown's condo.

HUD is demolishing buildings and selling off public housing land everywhere. Slums and vacant lots in the metropolitan fringes are filling up with HUD refugees. If San Franciscans are willing to stand by while Housing literally tosses black families across the Bay, we might as well fly a white hood from the flagpole at City Hall.

Policy analyst Meskunas rails against "outside agitators" who have "manipulated" tenants at Bernal Dwellings, as the tenants have protested the corrupt process by which they are being dislocated and brushed off with worthless Section 8 certificates.

While Meskunas admits that "finding enough apartments [for relocation] may be a major problem," she goes on to state that "Residents unable to return to the rebuilt Bernal Dwellings will continue to receive Section 8 assistance or will be housed in another public housing development in San Francisco."

This is a very disingenuous statement. There are no Section 8 apartments left in San Francisco. With public housing bursting at the seams with 30,000 tenants, and projects being demolished, where will these families find public housing apartments?

Meskunas sows fiscal terror by predicting that "Congress will strip the Housing Authority of operating subsidies necessary for operations."

Congress is not drastically cutting the operating subsidies for existing housing. These subsidies are vital spurs to the U.S. economy and end up in the pockets of interest groups that know how to buy lawmakers.

Even if HUD died, local agencies capable of professional property management could easily operate on tenant rents alone by damming the flood of slush at the Authority.

Meskunas correctly admits that when she was Housing Commission President there was "weak leadership." She then criticizes the Bernal Dwellings tenants for "threatening litigation as a means of stalling the process."

What is really bold about Meskunas's anti-litigation comment is that in 1990 she was the main force behind a major lawsuit that cost \$80,000 and that was filed to delay the construction of Robert B. Pitts Plaza, a project one block from Meskunas's Western Addition condo.

Are Mission residents so eager to see Bernal leveled, and our neighbors driven out of the 'hood, that we will blithely deny them due process of law? Zero strikes, you're out?

For the last 18 months, San Franciscans have witnessed a most outrageous and disgusting media war against the so-called "outside agitators" at Bernal Dwellings. The *San Francisco Examiner*, Channel Two, radio talk shows, and this newspaper have buzzed overtime attempting to give credence to the evil portrait that the media itself has painted of tenant-advocate Malik Rahim.

Even the SFPD has been forced to admit publicly that there is "no evidence of any illegal activities by Rahim."

Mr. Rahim has recently proven to be a very effective leader in rallying hundreds of tenants jeopardized by the brutal HOPE IV population removals. At a "HOPE IV Summit" held March 27-28 at the Center for African American Arts & Culture, Rahim was instrumental in

bringing together a historic coalition of tenants, the Bay Area National African American Leadership Summit, National Organization for Women, National People's Campaign, and many others, to coordinate a community-wide response to the HOPE IV bombs.

Rahim and the Bernal Dwellings tenants have united with professional architects and black developers to create a people-centered plan for rebuilding Bernal. Blueprints and information are available from the Coalition of Concerned Residents of Low Income and Public Housing (998-5287 or 821-6545).

It is the struggling movement toward local African American economic self-reliance that stands in the way of the destructive agendas of Housing and its allies, such as the ultra-right wing Institute for Contemporary Studies. ICS is a think-tank created in 1980 by Ed Meese to promote privatization and, according to Manning Marable, black Reaganism.

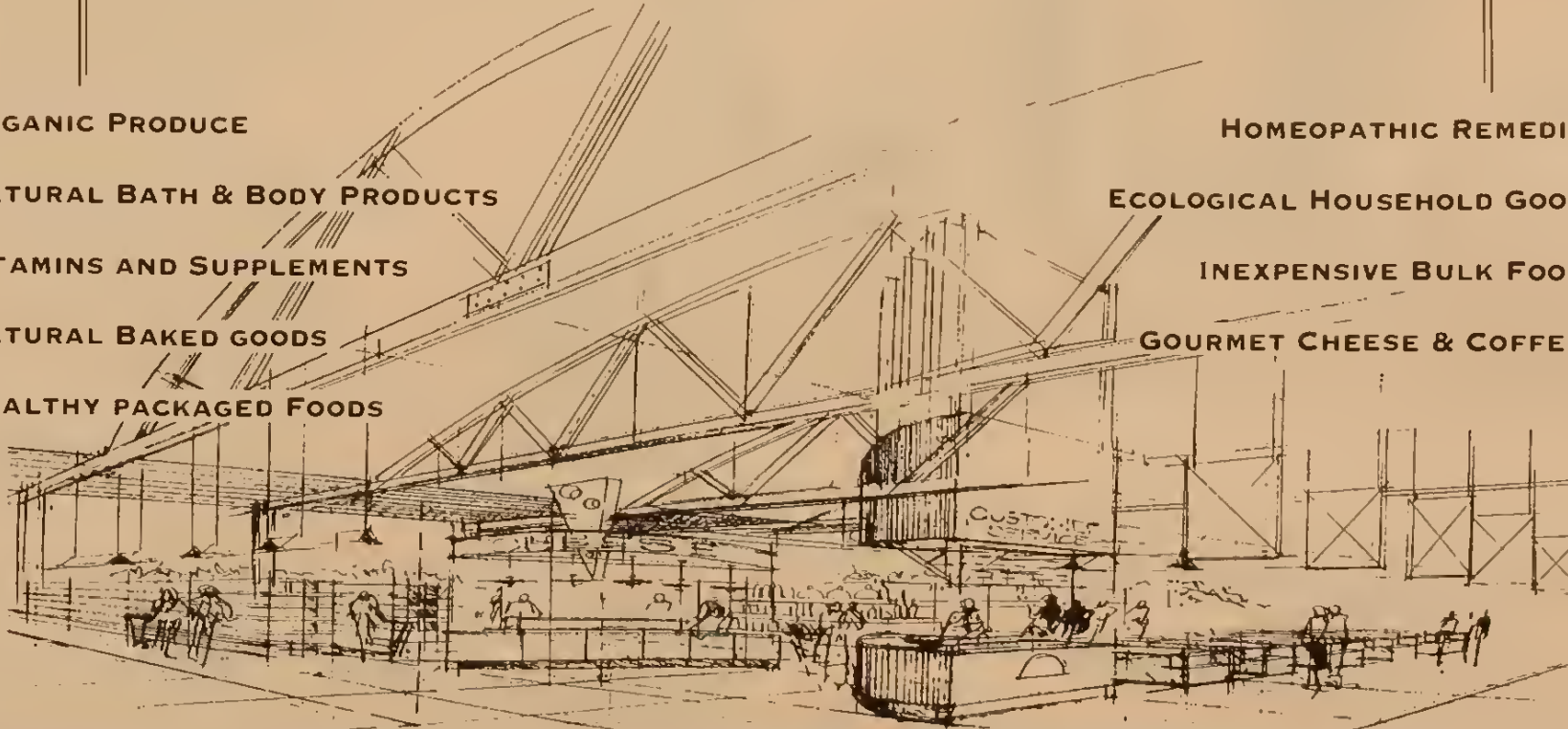
Meskunas has repeatedly slandered Rahim on television programs and in other media. One doesn't have to be a genius to know why. It is the ultimate in hypocrisy for an employee of ICS to characterize Rahim as an "outside agitator."

ICS is funded to the tune of a million dollars a year by reactionary entities such as Lilly Pharmaceuticals Company, the Hume Foundation, and USAID. The purpose of this funding is to support ICS's political agitation -- from outside the projects.

If "outside profiteers" would leave the tenants alone to select their own spokespeople and look after their own interests, we might see a very pleasant community emerge from the chaos at Bernal -- a lethal chaos created and maintained by the Housing Authority.

Peter Byrne and Marie Harrison are investigative reporters for the San Francisco Bay View newspaper, which has documented financial shenanigans, public lies, profit-taking, and illegal contracting in regard to HOPE IV. Byrne is a resident of the Inner Mission. Harrison recently lived for a year in Bernal Dwellings.

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Mission Booze Wars: A Frontline Update

by Victor Miller

The Ban

The controversy over Mission liquor sales continues to rage on a number of fronts. The issues are both heated and complex. A permanent moratorium on bars and off-sale facilities will soon be in place, effectively blocking new permits in the area bounded by Guerrero, Potrero, the Central Freeway, and Chavez.

At one point, it looked as if the moratorium meant that owners of bars and liquor stores would not be able to sell their businesses, angering local merchants. But this interpretation, which came from the City Attorney's Office, proved to be untrue, as things from the City Attorney's Office sometimes are.

The Wait

Legitimate restaurants that want serve beer and wine with meals are not affected by the moratorium, but they will continue to suffer from the glacial slowness of the alcohol regulation bureaucracy. Case in point is La Movida, a classy little paella restaurant on 16th Street near Guerrero. For the simple privilege of serving wine with meals, La Movida had to endure a six-month battle with neighbors and the Alcoholic Beverage Control office that at times took on surreal proportions (see the March 1996 *New Mission News* story, "Lost in the Permit Twilight Zone") before finally get the go-ahead last month.

The Deal

One establishment seeking an exemption from this ban is the newly relocated and expanded Rainbow Grocery on Fol-

som and 13th Streets. In an effort to help reduce the Mission's concentration of alcohol outlets, estimated to be the highest in the state, Rainbow has proposed buying two existing permits within the moratorium area, using one, and destroying the other. If the Board of Supervisors approves the plan, which seems likely, Rainbow will be able to sell organic beer and wine, and the Mission will have one less alcohol seller.

The Save

Last month, the *News* covered the story of another local business on the horns of the alcohol dilemma. Dentist Robert Cenicerros spent 15 years and his life savings restoring the Andora Inn and Cola Cabana Restaurant on Mission Street between 20th and 21st. The Cola Cabana was just not making it as a restaurant, and Cenicerros found himself in dire financial straits.

The restaurant's full bar, however, was doing alright by itself. Cenicerros wanted to close the restaurant and run only the bar, but he ran afoul not only of the moratorium but also of more restrictive state laws regarding bars in areas with higher than average crime rates and/or a higher than average concentration of alcohol sellers.

In April, a very creative solution to the Cola Cabana's problem was reached. The Cola Cabana, renamed Segovia's, will stay open and will be operated by Centro Latino, a well-established Mission non-profit agency serving senior citizens. Cenicerros will continue to operate the restaurant, and everybody will be not only happy but also legal, an increasingly rare combination.

All this starts May 7, but an all-you-can-eat crab feed on May 2 and a Cinco de Mayo Fiesta on May 3 and 4 precede

the official opening.

The List

Last month, the *News* published the Mission Police Station's list of bars and off-sale alcohol establishments in need of serious law enforcement services ("The Mission's Worst Bars"). The *News* heard directly and indirectly from some of those on the list who were none too happy about being there.

Mission Station Permit Officer Jim Ludlow, who has spent 20 of his 26 years on the force in the Mission, and who compiled the list, was unmoved by their complaints and stands by his selection.

Gus Murad, owner of the Serve U Market, number seven on the list, made the best case.

According to Murad, the numerous calls to the police about trouble at his store -- over 30 in a month's time -- were nearly all made by him in a effort to deal with some particularly tough characters

hanging out in front of the place. Murad says he attended a community meeting where he was encouraged to report suspicious activity to the cops and has now been victimized by following this advice. At least some of Murad's immediate neighbors support his claims.

Ludlow allows that Murad may be making some effort to clean up, but he still sees the Serve U as a problem establishment. Ludlow is also confident that numbers one and two on the list, Doc's Clock and the Diamond Club, are not long for the 'hood.

The Festival

One final dispatch from the booze front pertains to Carnival. At this year's festival, imbibers will be allowed to wander throughout the festival and will not be restricted to the "beer garden" area that was proposed earlier in the event planning.

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Mission "Hangout" Gets Millions

Two wonderful Mission organizing projects got rewarded last month. Everyone who cares about the neighborhood should take time to appreciate, and hopefully learn from, the accomplishments of Mission Science Workshop and the Fair Oaks Neighbors.

The Mission Science Workshop, a.k.a. "Mission Hang-Out," received a \$3 million National Science Fund grant to expand their program to 10 more sites in California. Begun five years ago in a Florida Street garage by Mission science nut Daniel Sudran, the hang-out now fills a large double room at the Community College building on Bartlett. The place looks like a small Exploratorium, with dozens of young students exploring the exhibits or working on experiments. The Workshop is a collaborative project with SFSU, City College, the SF School District and MESA (Math, Engineering and Science Achievement Project).

"We encourage the kids to come up with their own questions and solve them experimentally," says co-coordinator Modesto Tamez. Students make their own robots and fly their own rockets. One fourth grader, Mario Landau of Buena Vista Elementary, even invented an improvement on the old pinhole camera; his version can take three pictures between re-loads instead of just one.

Co-coordinator Sudran will do science anywhere; he once came to a neighborhood cleanup with microscopes and rain water so neighbors could see all the bugs that lived around 21st and Bryant. His hard work and focus, with the cooperation of many others, have created a program that with the help of NSF's \$3 million will be franchised to Oakland, Fresno, Los Angeles, and seven other sites. "They wanted us to go national," says Tamez, "and we wanted to do San Francisco, so we compromised on California."

Mission Science Workshop is open Mondays and Tuesdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., but adults are most welcome Wednesdays between 5 and 8 p.m. Check it out: It's free!

Jamestown Lives!

Fair Oaks Neighbors President Paul Nixon was recognized as a finalist for the Golden Rule Award for outstanding volunteer efforts. Nixon has spent much of the last 10 years saving Jamestown Community Center, organizing volunteer programs there, winning funding, and ultimately helping create a valuable resource for the neighborhood.

Founded by the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) in 1972, Jamestown suffered a series of funding cuts; in the late '80s the Center was running on \$12,000 a year. But when CYO tried to close it entirely, the neighbors got militant.

"We brought 50 to 75 young people to the Saint Francis for a demonstration," remembers Nixon. "We got extensive coverage and everyone realized we weren't going to disappear."

From 1989 to 1993, Nixon and neighbors patched together small grants with a tremendous amount of volunteer time to keep the center going. The Fair Oaks Neighbors made the intelligent decision not to go through the Recreation and Parks Department. Instead, they put together their own nonprofit agency, which in 1994 won \$50,000 from the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Families to hire one full-time and three part-time staffers.

Jamestown had lost their building, but they moved in with Edison School up the street and kept on. All the sports teams -- soccer, basketball, football, and softball, are coached by volunteers, and the tutorial program is also largely volunteer-run. Jamestown also has a camping program and drop-in recreation activities at Edison and Horace Mann.

What's impressive is the persistence of the neighbors, led by Nixon. "Even though it got frustrating at times, within the agencies that opposed us, there were always people that supported us. And there have been so many people who have helped. I was just kind of the person in the middle."

I believe all neighborhood organizations should "adopt" community resources like schools and recreation centers as a way of doing something lasting and constructive, and as an antidote to our depressing tendency to go out of business when there's no crisis. Fair Oaks and Jamestown proves what can be accomplished when community groups work together.

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The Mission Is A Great Place To Hang



On Saturday April 28, the Black and Blue II, a newly opened tattoo and piercing establishment on 21st Street near Mission, hosted a public hanging. Three men following a very unusual spiritual path hung from hooks inserted through their skin.

The sidewalk ceremony drew an instant crowd of afternoon strollers, who were both shocked and captivated by the ritual, which is seldom seen by non-practitioners. Black and Blue owner Devin Murfin (left), who hung suspended from his back for more than 15 minutes said, "We wanted to get it out there so anybody has a feel for this sort of thing can do it."

At one point, four police officers attempted to keep the 100 or so spectators from blocking the sidewalk and also attempted to figure out exactly what laws were being broken. Finally deciding that the makeshift scaffolding from which the men hung constituted an illegal structure, the cops asked that the event be concluded.

Astonished Mission residents then wandered off home with one hell of a story to tell when they got there. Murfin and friend Juan Leigh (right) are planning another outdoor hanging in the Mission sometime soon.

Journalist, Activist Deserves Fitting Memorial



Hundreds attended an April 12 memorial service held for Juan Pifarre at Mission Dolores Basilica. Photo by Jonathan Hoar.

Friends and colleagues of Juan Pifarre are still stunned by his tragic homicide that occurred on March 24 after he returned home with a young man he had met at a North Beach bar. Eighteen-year-old Steven R. Nary II, a sailor at Alameda Naval Air Station, has been arrested and charged with Pifarre's bludgeoning death.

Pifarre, a journalist and well-known Mission activist, was a passionate advocate of countless causes, including affordable housing. He was in the middle of a fiery fight for the housing development planned for 1010 South Van Ness when his life was cut short; it is a shame that he will not be around to see how this issue

comes out.

Pifarre was a great campaigner who always saw things through to the end. The *New Mission News* would like to suggest that he get the opportunity to finish this, his hurrah. The name of the 30-unit apartment complex so far remains 1010 South Van Ness, which is pretty tepid. Why not give it a name with real meaning, such as Pifarre Plaza?

Daniel Hernandez, executive director of Mission Housing Development Corporation, which is building the units, thinks it's "a great idea." Many of Juan Pifarre's friends in the community would agree.

Kick-off Benefit for Cross-Country Solo Cyclist

Bicycling from coast to coast has been done before, lots of times in fact, but next month one woman cyclist will be giving a new meaning and purpose to the event. In May Mission resident Mary Brown will set off on a solo bicycle ride across the country. Brown, 27, who was diagnosed with advanced Hodgkins Lymphoma two years ago, is making the trip to network with and raise awareness of young people with cancer.

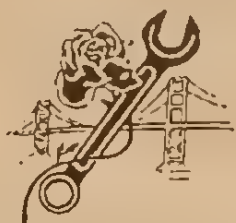
The ride, called the "Chain Reaction Tour", is sponsored by the Cancer Support Community begins on May 12, Mothers Day.

The day before, Saturday May 11, there will be a kick-off benefit show at the Community Music Center at 544 Capp St., beginning at 8pm. The show, featuring an opening catered reception, will include

members of the Medea Project (theater for incarcerated women, directed by Rhodesia Jones), Naomi Newman of A Traveling Jewish Theater, storyteller-comedienne Kris Kovick, the High Risk Dance Group and lots more. Tickets are \$7-20. For more information call Telling the Story at (415) 641-7285.

Brown says that throughout her battle with cancer, "My bicycle gave me the only sense of freedom I had during the course of my ten-month treatment. It's fun. It's fast. And most importantly it doesn't contribute to the environmental pollution that causes cancer. I'm extremely excited to share the bicycle's therapeutic effects with other people."

Brown will send back regular reports on her experiences which will be published in the *New Mission News*.



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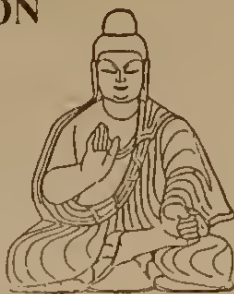
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Letters To The Editor

Priorities and Murals

Editor:

Ethnic murals are GREAT! We love them, BUT -- Senior Housing, Bethany Center wants an eight-story one. Shouldn't HUD funds be spent on a smaller one or help people? On Bethany's 25th anniversary they made \$1,200 They rent parking lot space -- and I don't know if the building has emergency back up power in event of a emergency -- where are the priorities here? Trips to China and all over! I'm glad I'm not old.

Poinciana Aguirro

March To "Fight The Buck"

Editor:

Is anyone disappointed or surprised that half a million people did not show up at the "March To fight the Right" rally?

We should all be, considering the state of affairs of our nation. You would think that after the horrible show of police brutality on that Mexican woman entering the land of opportunity, that there would be a large Mexican, Central and South American presence.

I would have thought teachers, hospital workers, unions, blue collar workers, and students would have not missed the opportunity to make their presence known, after all it's not like there aren't plenty of important issues in question. Affirmative Action, lack of funds for hospitals, a depleted education system, Medicare...So why weren't we all out there?

Simple, because there is a very important element lacking in our social fiber, the element of truth. We have grown so accustomed to the show that we've lost touch with the inspiration. And the sense of being ripped off only grows deeper and deeper. Do we wonder then why our youth is so full of rage and violence? Why an entire generation is apathetic, unconscientious, self-absorbed, obsessed with appearance, desperate to take, take and incapable of giving? So what happened at the march? I was there selling. I've just recently started my own business and my husband and I are working very hard to get our business off the ground. We thought the rally would be a good opportunity to get financially ahead.

Our specialty is Chilean food. We put every penny we had into paying for the booth (\$550), practically closed the doors of Chile Lindo (our restaurant) for a whole week to prepare for the occasion and worked many, many hours preparing empanadas, a product that takes a great deal of patience to prepare. We had originally set our prices at \$1.50 or \$1.75. I had no previous experience in this sort of thing.

The organizers were taken aback with our price and tactfully insisted over the phone that we raise our prices to \$2.50 without previous knowledge of our product. Cheese empanadas are a delicacy, they are deep fried so the cheese melts in the center. The dough is very light. They are not big or filling.

By the time we lowered our prices the bulk of the people were gone and we were left with many unsold empanadas. Early in the day I was introduced to the man to whom I had written a \$550 check for the booth. I explained to him that I had no experience in this sort of thing and if he would please look things over, and make sure we were OK for the health inspectors, etc.

He gave me airs of importance, glanced things over and said we were fine. Had he had any consciousness he would have made sure that the price he insisted we charge was adequate for the product. I can't help thinking that the only motivation for his insistence that we raise the price of our product was so that we

wouldn't have such an inexpensive product competing with the rest.

By the end of the day it was all clear to me. It's like everything else. The real motivation behind it all, even the march, is money. And money doesn't move the masses. What moves the masses is truth and love.

Paula Tejeda

Good News

Editor:

Just a note of continuing appreciation for the *New Mission News*. While I live elsewhere in the city, I envy Mission residents for what their community gets through you. Especially like the march story about St. Peter's evicting the housing committee and the lead on the page 3 zoning story: "Alcohol Can Lead to Arguments Even When Nobody's Drinking." Keep up the good work.

Richard Olive

Law and Disorder

Editor:

I see that Chief of Police Lau has initiated a new career path for our juveniles. Drug dealing on our streets, robbery of our homes and theft of our vehicles will be dealt with by issuing a ticket. Just drives up the cost of doing business in San Francisco.

Da Mayor has turned over our parks to the homeless for encampments, the Chief of Police has turned over our streets and homes to the juveniles and the District Attorney has turned over the Mission, Tenderloin and Hayes Valley to the prostitutes. What's left?

Ron Norlin

An Outside Agitator Responds

Editor:

This is to respond to Barbara Meskunas's ludicrous editorial, "The Rise and Fall of Bernal Dwellings." In this article, Meskunas makes absolutely no attempt to speak to any Bernal resident, dismissed as "easily manipulated" or activists, dubbed "outside agitators." As to be expected from a former Housing Authority Commissioner, Meskunas's article panders to the fear and misconceptions that have brought public housing to the breaking point.

The allegations that opposition to HOPE 6 is solely the work of outside agitators is a lie. Bernal Dwellings residents have written their own plan for rehabilitation of their homes. The "New Vision Plan" provides a feasible alternative to the HUD/Housing Authority scam. The plan incorporates job development, drug prevention and treatment, senior and handicapped living space and ample room to meet and rebuild community. It is everything that HOPE 6 claims to be, but isn't. "New Vision" proves that Public Housing Residents can and will advance their own program.

Maybe more alarming is Meskunas's foolish insistence that those not allowed to return to Bernal will simply receive Section 8. First of all Section 8 is still not at all popular with private landlords. Secondly, when reconstruction is over all HOPE 6 Section 8's will be terminated. Don't forget that Section 8 may well be eliminated altogether by the end of 1997 if Newt Gingrich has his way. Most relocated residents from other projects have not found replacement housing with SF. HOPE 6 removes African Americans from the city.

I am a shameless organizer who works with The Eviction Defense Network. At

the invitation of Public Housing residents we have stood alongside them every step of the way. We will continue to expose HOPE 6 for what it is: a gift to the developers who are just itching to gobble up the rest of San Francisco once the projects are out of the way. Even if HOPE 6 was pure in intention it constructs 400 less units than will be demolished. The "mixed use" plan will only allow 1/3 of the original tenants to return. The numbers simply do not add up. We too want to see an end to the dismal state of Public Housing, but the way forward of Public Housing, but the way forward is by listening to the tenants and following their good ideas for the future.

Mark my words, in the following months, record numbers of Bernal Dwellings residents will receive their eviction notices. Why? The more evicted by the summer, the fewer will be entitled to relocation benefits. Expect "outside agitators" like the Eviction Defense Network, Coalition of Concerned Residents Of Low Income and Public Housing, and The Housing Rights Committee to be there to provide legal information and organizing support. Frankly, I am surprised that the *New Mission News*, a paper born from tenant struggle, would print garbage such as Meskunas's editorial.

Solidarity,
James Tracy
Eviction Defense Network

Queries

Editor:

In "Adios to a Mission Original" you mentioned that friends and associates were shocked by the murder of Juan Pifarre. For some of them it was a double shock. A lot of heterosexual people were shocked that he was a homosexual, allegedly murdered by a trick he picked up in North Beach.

I know its a difficult position to be in... you being the editor-in-chief of the *New Mission News* and all. What should you report? Do you want to offend the traditional Mission left and say he lived and died in the closet? Or do you just say people were shocked and leave it at that? I guess you didn't want to besmirch his

good name and past as a prominent person in the Mission.

Well I'm shocked. Shocked that Mr. Pifarre felt he had to live as he did -- closeted from much of the heterosexual Mission. And shocked that there is no one ballsy enough to report it in the neighborhood news. Who's to blame?

The Church? Machismo? The traditional Mission Left? Editors of newspapers that "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable"? Just whose sensibilities do you think you are protecting?

The reason that these crimes continue to occur is because instead of having healthy sexual lives, some old school homosexual men feel the only way that they can live their "secret" sexual lives is pick up straight acting strangers. Its has always been dangerous.

We are truly sorry that this happened to Juan. He will be missed.

Sincerely,
Mark Duran Co-founder of Queer Nation San Francisco
Daniel Paiz Co-founder of Queer Nation San Francisco
Andrew Chevignon Founder of the 23 B. boyz

P.S. You also forgot to mention that The Diamond (Diamante) Bar is a undercover macho gay bar. Or couldn't you figure that one out either?

Murals and Priorities

Editor:

I have an elderly friend who lives in Bethany Center Senior Housing. The power outage on early Sunday April 7 has her scared. To my knowledge the building has no emergency power backup except near the director's office. What if there was a heart attack -- someone did die during that last big quake when the Marina burned.

They want an eight-story mural, but shouldn't this other come first? Murals are very nice, but where are priorities here?

Sincerely,
Valenciana Boccarenì

Legislature Bullies Tenants

Bills Reduce Occupancy Standards, Jeopardize Affordable Housing

State Legislature Bullying Tenants: Bills to reduce occupancy standards will deplete affordable housing and discriminate against large families

AB616 (Morrow) and its corollary, AB2908 (Goldsmith), are only two of many anti-tenant bills this year's legislative season in Sacramento has introduced. AB616 will drastically limit occupancy standards for housing throughout California and will have a discriminatory effect on large households and on certain ethnic groups.

In San Francisco, the brunt will fall heavily upon the Latino, Chinese, and new immigrant communities, which often have large families living in single rental apartments. The Mission, Chinatown, and the Tenderloin -- neighborhoods with some of the only affordable housing left in San Francisco -- will be severely affected.

AB616 redefines the California Uniform Housing Code to limit occupancy based on space "designed and intended to be used as bedrooms" as opposed to the total square footage formula currently used. In other words, renters could no longer, for example, use the large amount of space in a San Francisco Victorian to create additional bedrooms to house more family members. Moreover, AB616 does not define whose design and intent establishes bedroom use. It provides no guidance or enforcement mechanism and thus gives local government and landlords broad discretion in reducing occupancy levels.

Many old buildings in San Francisco converted for rental use do not necessari-

ly have rooms designed and intended as bedrooms. In these cases, all discretion in determining room use would be left to landlords renting those units. Currently San Francisco has a relatively liberal occupancy standard that enables large families to live together to keep rents affordable. If AB616 passes, landlords could turn down large families in favor of rental groups with fewer people.

About 30 bills have been introduced this year to reduce tenants' rights in California. On the agenda are bills to make tenants liable for failure to keep property free of debris such as abandoned vehicles, even if the debris is not their own; to enable landlords to use security deposit money more liberally; to allow landlords to charge a screening fee for prospective renters; to bar subletting in rent-controlled units; and to make it harder for indigent renters to get fee waivers from the court when defending evictions.

According to Marie Cipeiela, Director of the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco, a tenants' rights counseling organization, "There are so many anti-tenant bills this year, it seems the same legislators who want to eliminate rent control have decided to engage in guerrilla warfare. We are getting it from all sides."

In response, tenants from around the Bay Area are organizing to get local representatives to take a stand against these bills, especially in the state Senate. To find out more, call the HRCSF at 749-3700 or the Comite de Vivienda de San Pedro at 487-9203.




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Mission District Calendar

MAY

1

WEDNESDAY

Rprtry Dnc Wrks - Potrzebie Dance Project presents greatest hits, showcasing distinct combinations of athleticism, musicality, and magnetic performing presence, lull of eastern European sensibility. 8PM, ODC Performance Gallery, 3153 17th St., Call 863-9834, till May 4.

Papers Please - Celebrating Asian Pacific Heritage Month, Unbound Spirit presents *Angel Island*, dances based on historical legacy of Angel Island, guest choreographer M. Koob. 8PM/2PM Sat., Dancers' Group/Footwork, 3221 22nd St., \$10Adv/\$12, 824-5044, Thru May 4

2

THURSDAY

Segundo de Mayo - Papel picado craft-make a traditional Mexican decoration, sign up in advance. 4PM, Mission Branch Public Library, 3359 22nd St., Free, 695-5090

3

FRIDAY

White Noise - Jazzzzzzz, at Radio Valencia with The Blue Room Boys. 7PM, Radio Valencia, 1199 Valencia St., Free, 826-1199

4

SATURDAY

Big Boned Women - Are the members of FAT LIP Readers Theatre, a collective of 12 lat, leisty women who fight discrimination against lat people by presenting monologues, skits, and the like. Refreshments and, of course, snacks follow. 7:30PM, Women's Building, 3543 18th St., \$8-20, 585-3955.

Right=Bad - A "reactionary roller coaster ride," as film artists peg the broad side of the republican bam with irony and wit. Anti-immigration, right-wing Christian militia movements, and Buchanan, fun, fun, fun. 8:30PM, ATA, 992 Valencia St., \$5, 824-3890

Strung Out - Gato Colorado puppet Theater, watch beautiful marionettes perform Mexican dances. Noon, Mission Branch Public Library, 3359 22nd St., Free, 695-5090.

5

SUNDAY

What's in a name? - The Dark Hollow Bluegrass Band ("Who woulda thought two years ago that a bluegrass band could fill a house in the Mission?", good for us down home folks) performs. 7PM, Radio Valencia, 1199 Valencia St., \$5, 826-1199

7

TUESDAY

Ward Out - A rap group for Latina lesbianas and bisexuals 25 & under, everyone welcome. 6:30PM, Proyecto ContraSIDA Por Vida, 2973 16th St., Free, 864-7278.

Wear a Hat - To this video screening, *A Salute to Masturbation*, presented by Good Vibrations and hosted by Carol Queen, sex educator and author of *Exhibitionism for the Shy*, Come one, come all. 7 & 9:15PM, The Roxie Theater, 3117 16th St., 974-8985 for ticket info.

Haut Culture - Author Woody Haut examines pulp fiction, Thompson, Himes, Chandler, and Spillane, putting it into the context of cold war hysteria and the Bomb, very entertaining stuff, I loved it. 7:30PM, Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St., Free, 282-9246.

Look, Fido's Resting so Peacefully - No he's not, he's dead, do Dr. Devora Goldberg's free Pet Loss Support Group for grieving pet owners. 7:30PM, SFSPCA, 2500 16th St., 554-3000.

8

WEDNESDAY

Taylor Made - Organic landscaper and permaculturist Andrea Taylor will lead a discussion on permaculture, a design method to create abundant, sustainable, food-producing environments, SNACKS and drinks afterward. 7:30PM, The New College Cultural Center, 766 Valencia St., \$5-\$10, 905-4212.

9

THURSDAY

Don't Dawd It - Doug knows what the folks he's talking about, his 10 week class on eco-

nomc processes, problems, and possibilities continues into its second month. 7:30PM, Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St., Free, 282-9246

Self-involved - A book party for Betty Dodson, author of *Sex for One*, an essential guide to sell loving, new edition, new chapter, everyone welcome, no couples. 8PM, Good Vibrations, 1210 Valencia St., Free, 974-8980

Am I in an Elevator? - As part of Unbound Spirit's May residency they present *The Many Faces of Me*, *Slaying the Dragon*, (excerpts) and repertory works by Nancy Ng. 8PM/2PM Mat. Sat., Dancers' Group/Footwork, 3221 22nd St., \$10adv/\$12, 824-5044, Thru May 11.

10

FRIDAY

Free Michelle Pelletier - From earthly bonds, she and Hellene Vosters, navigate the territory of personal and collective memory, unearthing the bodies story (freedom?, a lifting of dirt? I don't know), *Eve's Trespass* and *Go Girl!* respectively. 8PM, Luna Sea, 2940 16th St., \$8-\$12, 863-298, Also May 11.

Home Expo - A double bill featuring home-makers Lizz Roman and Dancers, and SQUAD

in an evening of comedy, theater, dance, and spaghetti sauce. 8PM, ODC Performance Gallery, 3153 17th St., Tickets and info 863-9834, Also May 11, 17, 18.

Me, Me, Me - Gideon Meir, harpsichord, in a solo recital of works by Bach, Rameau, Scarlatti, and Handel. 8PM, Community Music Center, 544 Capp St., \$10/\$5, 647-6015.

Mondo Amungus - Mondo Jud Hart, Mission worker and liver-in, opens a show of prints, drawings, posters, books and other, he also builds floats, cool. CalÉ Fanañ, 2773 24th St., 285-1467.

Stephen, King - Mystery authors Laurie K. and S. Saylor will be reading from their latest works, bring your own mystery for psychic evaluation. 7PM, Glen Park Books, 2788 Diamond St., Free, 586-3733.

11

SATURDAY

Extend A Helping Paw - At this volunteer orientation for those interested in helping out at the SFSPCA, cat socializers, dog walker, adoption counselors, and stool samplers needed. 10AM, SFSPCA, 2500 16th St., Free, 554-3087, Also May 21, 5PM.

Speak No Evil - At this art exhibition and silent auction to benefit Mission Art Space, an arts organization for young people in the Mission District, works of Doug Minkler, René Yáñez, Abra Brayman, multiple mediums, whoa now. 6PM, The New College Cultural Center, 766 Valencia St., Free, 437-3401.

Free Admisslon - Opening reception for *Undocumented Passages*, an interactive mixed media installation exploring the lives immigrants leave behind, Nick D. Gómez, Amelia Rodrigues, Joseph Sung, and Miguel Torres; conservatives welcome and then hog tied. 3PM, Galena de la Raza/Studio 24, 2857 24th St., Free, 826-8009.

The Regal Don Presents - *Clarinet Thing*, a bunch of men and women playing jazz for other men and women. 7PM, Radio Valencia, 1199 Valencia St., \$5-\$6 off with beret, 826-1199.

Don't Buy That, Buy This - Harold Bolhem's major critical work on Madison Avenue, *The Ad and the Ego*; apparently, according to the



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radical cultural theorists he interviews, the ads we see aren't always true and lead to a consumer oriented society-no shit. 8:30PM, ATA, 992 Valencia St., \$5, 824-3890.

12 SUNDAY

Opera Under Glass - A spring concert of songs related to spring and flowers, performed by Ina Chalis Opera Ensemble. 4:30PM, Community Music Center, 544 Capp St., \$8/\$3, 647-6015.

14 TUESDAY

Poetry/It Is, Alas I Die - Daniel McKenzie and Geoffrey (Jeff) Lake Todd read. 7PM, Keane's 3300 Club, 3300 Mission St., Free, 826-6886.

No, Really, You Were Great, Honest - Never had an orgasm? Want to? Take this workshop on the female orgasm, a six week course that will give you all the tools you need to become orgasmic, class participation. 8PM, Good Vibrations, 1210 Valencia St., \$175 all sessions, 974-8980.

15 WEDNESDAY

Rhythm and Rhyme - An evening of music and poetry with poets Kim Adonizio and Luke Trent with bassist Michael Shea. 7PM, Glen Park Books, 2788 Diamond St., Free, 586-3733.

Pot Snap Shot - A photo sculpture class for lesbian and bisexual women of color 25 and under, pre-registration required. 6:30PM, PCPV, 2973 16th St., Free, 864-7278.

16 THURSDAY

Big Concepts - Bebe Miller and her company return to the Bay Area with *TINY SISTERS* in the *Enormous Land*, "drawing on images of drastic landscapes/weather patterns, season changes/juxtaposing them/exploration/dynamic parallel/ultimate communicative", you get the idea. 8PM, Theater Artaud, 450 Florida St., \$12.50-\$18.50, 621-7797, Also May 17, 18, and 19 at 2PM.

And if a Frog had Wings - An exciting pilot project; six emerging choreographers come together for an evening of experimentation and new choreography, Peter Foster, Debby Kajiyama, Jael Wagner, and others. 8PM, ODC Performance Gallery, 3153 17th St., For tickets and info 863-9834.

Light Fare - Opening reception for *Glow*, comprised of international artists who, "from a fleeting, evanescent material-light-create works that fuse art historical and cultural conceptions of the sublime," clear enough. 6PM, New Langton Arts, 1246 Folsom St., Free, 626-5416.

17 FRIDAY

jazz - The Blue Room Boys perform at RV. 7PM, Radio Valencia, 1199 Valencia St., Free, 826-1199.

18 SATURDAY

I'm OJ, You're OJ - Bruce Conner's new 15 min. *Television Assassination*, and a pair of premiers about the OJ trial media circus to "cut a critical swath through the trash heap of this travesty of justice," cool. 8:30PM, ATA, 992 Valencia St., \$5, 824-3890.

Pipsqueaks - SF Children's Chorus, Urs Leonhardt Steiner, Return of the Phantom, contemporary children's drama composed by Urs itself. 7PM, Community Music Center, 544 Capp St., Free, 647-6015, Also May 19 at 4PM.

lfff the Price is Right - Saint Anthony School hosts their sixth annual school auction, silent auction, dinner, and a live auction (illegal?). 5PM, St. Anthony School, 299 Precita Ave., \$13/\$25cpl, 648-2008.

19 SUNDAY

That's Mr. P.C. to You - CMC Jazz Band, Ken Rosen, director with special guest Jesse Foster, jazz voice, featuring *Mr. P.C.* by John Coltrane, jazz hands, a tune by Al Cooper, jazz fingers. 3PM, Community Music Center, 544 Capp St., Free, 647-6015.

21 TUESDAY

I am Alone - OK, OK, Sten Rudstrom, Solo Performer, weaves improvisation, movement, and text into highly physical performances-work in progress *Theater of Cruelty*, writings of Antonin Artaud. 8PM, ODC Performance Gallery, 3153 17th St., For tickets and info 863-9834.

Ironies and Absurdities - Are reflected upon in *MaidenHome*, authored by Ding Xiaopi, one of China's most controversial writers, her work is at the forefront of the new wave of Chinese women's literature, you could be one of the first hip to this trend, go for it. 7PM, Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St., Free, 282-9246.

22 WEDNESDAY

Jesus Christ Mom!! - Poet, and Playwright Himilce Novas reads from her debut novel about incest, mistaken identity, and immigrant dreams, *Mangos, Bananas and Coconuts*, a satire of magic realism and immigration begun in Cuba in the 1950's. 7PM, Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St., Free, 282-9246.

Though Shalt Come! - To this book party celebrating the release of the *Ten Commandments of Pleasure*, by Dr. Susan Block, a radio and TV sexpert in LA who does her show from her bed in a rare public appearance. 8PM, Good Vibrations, 1210 Valencia St., Free, 974-8980.

24 FRIDAY

The Blue Room Boys - Jazz The Blue Room Boys The Blue Room Boys, 7PM, Radio Valencia, 1199 Valencia St., Free, 826-1199.

25 SATURDAY

A Bunch of Funny Names - The Alex Weiss Unit, straight from Amsterdam, Jonas Muller, Tomas Barfod, George Cremaschi, and Rent Romus. 7PM, Radio Valencia, 1199 Valencia St., \$5, 826-1199.

28 TUESDAY

A Mighty Poet! - DAVID BROMIGE. 7PM, Keane's 3300 Club, Mission St., Free, 826-6886.

Free Tibet - Author Sumner Carnahan and Lama Kunga Rinpoche discuss the life of his father Tsipon Shuguba, the last surviving official in the 14th Dalai Lama's government, *In the Presence of My Enemies* is his moving, personal account, horror, bombings, and massacres. 7:30PM, Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St., Free, 282-9246.

29 WEDNESDAY

Erotic Reading Circle - Share your writing or someone else's with this group of men and women of all proclivities, hosts Jack Davis and Carol Queen are looking for contributions to an *Erotic Reading Circle Anthology*, bring your most stimulating work. 8PM, Good Vibrations, 1210 Valencia St., Free, 974-8980.



Free Stephen Pelton - Stephen Pelton Dance Company and theater company Word for Word team up for an evening of story telling, dance, and music with live premiers, W for W will present *The Ways of White Folks*, by Langston Hughes, SPDC, Workday Blues. 8PM, ODC Performance Gallery, 3153 17th St., 863-9834, Also May 31, June 1.

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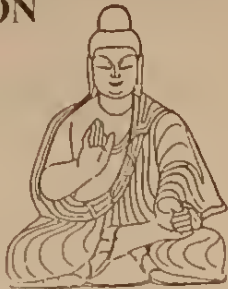
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Letters To The Editor

Priorities and Murals

Editor:

Ethnic murals are GREAT! We love them, BUT -- Senior Housing, Bethany Center wants an eight-story one. Shouldn't HUD funds be spent on a smaller one or help people? On Bethany's 25th anniversary they made \$1,200 They rent parking lot space -- and I don't know if the building has emergency back up power in event of a emergency -- where are the priorities here? Trips to China and all over! I'm glad I'm not old.

Poinciana Aguirro

March To "Fight The Buck"

Editor:

Is anyone disappointed or surprised that half a million people did not show up at the "March To fight the Right" rally?

We should all be, considering the state of affairs of our nation. You would think that after the horrible show of police brutality on that Mexican woman entering the land of opportunity, that there would be a large Mexican, Central and South American presence.

I would have thought teachers, hospital workers, unions, blue collar workers, and students would have not missed the opportunity to make their presence known, after all it's not like there aren't plenty of important issues in question. Affirmative Action, lack of funds for hospitals, a depleted education system, Medicare...So why weren't we all out there?

Simple, because there is a very important element lacking in our social fiber, the element of truth. We have grown so accustomed to the show that we've lost touch with the inspiration. And the sense of being ripped off only grows deeper and deeper. Do we wonder then why our youth is so full of rage and violence? Why an entire generation is apathetic, unconscientious, self-absorbed, obsessed with appearance, desperate to take, take and incapable of giving? So what happened at the march? I was there selling. I've just recently started my own business and my husband and I are working very hard to get our business off the ground. We thought the rally would be a good opportunity to get financially ahead.

Our specialty is Chilean food. We put every penny we had into paying for the booth (\$550), practically closed the doors of Chile Lindo (our restaurant) for a whole week to prepare for the occasion and worked many, many hours preparing empanadas, a product that takes a great deal of patience to prepare. We had originally set our prices at \$1.50 or \$1.75. I had no previous experience in this sort of thing.

The organizers were taken aback with our price and tactfully insisted over the phone that we raise our prices to \$2.50 without previous knowledge of our product. Cheese empanadas are a delicacy, they are deep fried so the cheese melts in the center. The dough is very light. They are not big or filling.

By the time we lowered our prices the bulk of the people were gone and we were left with many unsold empanadas. Early in the day I was introduced to the man to whom I had written a \$550 check for the booth. I explained to him that I had no experience in this sort of thing and if he would please look things over, and make sure we were OK for the health inspectors, etc.

He gave me airs of importance, glanced things over and said we were fine. Had he had any consciousness he would have made sure that the price he insisted we charge was adequate for the product. I can't help thinking that the only motivation for his insistence that we raise the price of our product was so that we

wouldn't have such an inexpensive product competing with the rest.

By the end of the day it was all clear to me. It's like everything else. The real motivation behind it all, even the march, is money. And money doesn't move the masses. What moves the masses is truth and love.

Paula Tcjeda

Good News

Editor:

Just a note of continuing appreciation for the *New Mission News*. While I live elsewhere in the city, I envy Mission residents for what their community gets through you. Especially like the march story about St. Peter's evicting the housing committee and the lead on the page 3 zoning story: "Alcohol Can Lead to Arguments Even When Nobody's Drinking." Keep up the good work.

Richard Olive

Law and Disorder

Editor:

I see that Chief of Police Lau has initiated a new career path for our juveniles. Drug dealing on our streets, robbery of our homes and theft of our vehicles will be dealt with by issuing a ticket. Just drives up the cost of doing business in San Francisco.

Da Mayor has turned over our parks to the homeless for encampments, the Chief of Police has turned over our streets and homes to the juveniles and the District Attorney has turned over the Mission, Tenderloin and Hayes Valley to the prostitutes. What's left?

Ron Norlin

An Outside Agitator Responds

Editor:

This is to respond to Barbara Meskunas's ludicrous editorial, "The Rise and Fall of Bernal Dwellings." In this article, Meskunas makes absolutely no attempt to speak to any Bernal resident, dismissed as "easily manipulated" or activists, dubbed "outside agitators." As to be expected from a former Housing Authority Commissioner, Meskunas's article panders to the fear and misconceptions that have brought public housing to the breaking point.

The allegations that opposition to HOPE 6 is solely the work of outside agitators is a lie. Bernal Dwellings residents have written their own plan for rehabilitation of their homes. The "New Vision Plan" provides a feasible alternative to the HUD/Housing Authority scam. The plan incorporates job development, drug prevention and treatment, senior and handicapped living space and ample room to meet and rebuild community. It is everything that HOPE 6 claims to be, but isn't. "New Vision" proves that Public Housing Residents can and will advance their own program.

Maybe more alarming is Meskunas's foolish insistence that those not allowed to return to Bernal will simply receive Section 8. First of all Section 8 is still not at all popular with private landlords. Secondly, when reconstruction is over all HOPE 6 Section 8's will be terminated. Don't forget that Section 8 may well be eliminated altogether by the end of 1997 if Newt Gingrich has his way. Most relocated residents from other projects have not found replacement housing with SF. HOPE 6 removes African Americans from the city.

I am a shameless organizer who works with The Eviction Defense Network. At

CINCO DE MAYO '96

by Karen Zapata

Cinco de Mayo is a day of pride and celebration for both Mexicans and Latinos. On May 5, 1862, Mexican forces defeated the invading soldiers of Napoleon in the town of Puebla. Some say this defeat ended European intervention in the Americas; other say it encouraged the French to send reinforcements. Either way, the battle at Puebla that fifth of May signified the people's solidarity and determination. Today, people of many nationalities celebrate Cinco de Mayo with parades and festivals that honor Mexico's challenge to imperialism and that recognize the resistance to imperialism by other Latin American countries.

This May 5, San Francisco's Cinco de Mayo grand parade will begin at 10 a.m. at 24th and Bryant Streets. It will turn down Mission Street and go up to the Civic Center Plaza, culminating in the Cinco de Mayo festival from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. This year's parade features over 50 contingents, including mariachis, Aztec dancers, and beautifully adorned floats. The festival will feature carnival rides, a children's area, two entertainment stages with banda and salsa music, and free health screenings and health information.

New to the festival are an enclosed cafe with traditional Mexican music, and an artisan island where visitors can watch artists work in their different mediums. Admission to the Civic Center festival is \$4 for adults and \$1 for seniors. Children under 12 are admitted free if accompanied by an adult.

San Francisco's Cinco de Mayo festival is hosted by the Mission Economic Cultural Association. This year's celebration honors Latino men. The festival's organizers also stress the importance of recognizing the contributions of Latinos in the face of the recent rise of anti-immigrant legislation and discrimination. Bringing this issue home, five outstanding

Latino men will be honored as role models for their work in the Mission community. These five Co-Grand Marshalls are: Captain Al Casciato of the Mission Police Station, Bob Gamino, a teacher at Everett Middle School, Mariano Tapia of the Ballet Folklórico, Richard Cordova, Administrator of San Francisco General Hospital, and Alfonso Maciel, owner of Maciel Printing.

The *News* talked with Grand Marshall Maciel at his 24th Street shop.

Born in Jalisco, Mexico, Maciel immigrated to the U.S. in 1964, landing in the Mission District, where he has lived ever since. His political involvement, he explains, came out of his art: "I was printing at that time, and it's impossible to be involved in art and not be politicized."

Maciel's early images were created to educate people involved in the movement against the Somoza regime in Nicaragua. These images, he says enthusiastically, "were eventually used for book covers, and one was used as a sign-off for Sandinista TV."

Maciel and many other Mission District activists were the muscle behind the establishment of the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts. His involvement in community arts flourished, and in 1978 Maciel became director of the Neighborhood Arts Program. He restructured the organization so that the neighborhoods would decide its programming.

In the early '80s, Maciel had, as he puts it, "the wonderful opportunity to have a mid-life crisis," and he opened Maciel Printing on 24th Street. He is still involved in the Mission Cultural Center, however. "Although I am a businessperson," he explains, "I have centered my working life around the Mission area and the Latino community."

Maciel uses the ideas he developed in community activism to run one of the most successful print shops in the Mission District. "Hard work and perseverance will actually take you somewhere," he obser-



ves. After 12 years of owning the business, he says, "I still come in here at 5 a.m. because it requires that kind of effort." But Maciel's success has not gotten in the way of his commitment and love of Latino culture and art: "Regardless of whatever success you have attained, you cannot forget who you are, and if you can incorporate who you are with your work life, all

the better."

For Maciel, Cinco de Mayo's importance "stems from the fact that it was appropriated by other Latinos as a way of celebrating our indigenous people's victory over an imperial power."

For more information on Cinco de Mayo, call MECA at 826-1401.

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Mission "Hangout" Gets Millions

Two wonderful Mission organizing projects got rewarded last month. Everyone who cares about the neighborhood should take time to appreciate, and hopefully learn from, the accomplishments of Mission Science Workshop and the Fair Oaks Neighbors.

The Mission Science Workshop, a.k.a. "Mission Hang-Out," received a \$3 million National Science Fund grant to expand their program to 10 more sites in California. Begun five years ago in a Florida Street garage by Mission science nut Daniel Sudran, the hang-out now fills a large double room at the Community College building on Bartlett. The place looks like a small Exploratorium, with dozens of young students exploring the exhibits or working on experiments. The Workshop is a collaborative project with SFSU, City College, the SF School District and MESA (Math, Engineering and Science Achievement Project).

"We encourage the kids to come up with their own questions and solve them experimentally," says co-coordinator Modesto Tamez. Students make their own robots and fly their own rockets. One fourth grader, Mario Landau of Buena Vista Elementary, even invented an improvement on the old pinhole camera: his version can take three pictures between re-loads instead of just one.

Co-coordinator Sudran will do science anywhere; he once came to a neighborhood cleanup with microscopes and rain water so neighbors could see all the bugs that lived around 21st and Bryant. His hard work and focus, with the cooperation of many others, have created a program that with the help of NSF's \$3 million will be franchised to Oakland, Fresno, Los Angeles, and seven other sites. "They wanted us to go national," says Tamez, "and we wanted to do San Francisco, so we compromised on California."

Mission Science Workshop is open Mondays and Tuesdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., but adults are most welcome Wednesdays between 5 and 8 p.m. Check it out: It's free!

Jamestown Lives!

Fair Oaks Neighbors President Paul Nixon was recognized as a finalist for the Golden Rule Award for outstanding volunteer efforts. Nixon has spent much of the last 10 years saving Jamestown Community Center, organizing volunteer programs there, winning funding, and ultimately helping create a valuable resource for the neighborhood.

Founded by the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) in 1972, Jamestown suffered a series of funding cuts; in the late '80s the Center was running on \$12,000 a year. But when CYO tried to close it entirely, the neighbors got militant.

"We brought 50 to 75 young people to the Saint Francis for a demonstration," remembers Nixon. "We got extensive coverage and everyone realized we weren't going to disappear."

From 1989 to 1993, Nixon and neighbors patched together small grants with a tremendous amount of volunteer time to keep the center going. The Fair Oaks Neighbors made the intelligent decision not to go through the Recreation and Parks Department. Instead, they put together their own nonprofit agency, which in 1994 won \$50,000 from the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Families to hire one full-time and three part-time staffers.

Jamestown had lost their building, but they moved in with Edison School up the street and kept on. All the sports teams -- soccer, basketball, football, and softball, are coached by volunteers, and the tutorial program is also largely volunteer-run. Jamestown also has a camping program and drop-in recreation activities at Edison and Horace Mann.

What's impressive is the persistence of the neighbors, led by Nixon. "Even though it got frustrating at times, within the agencies that opposed us, there were always people that supported us. And there have been so many people who have helped. I was just kind of the person in the middle."

I believe all neighborhood organizations should "adopt" community resources like schools and recreation centers as a way of doing something lasting and constructive, and as an antidote to our depressing tendency to go out of business when there's no crisis. Fair Oaks and Jamestown proves what can be accomplished when community groups work together.

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New Mission News

Bier List

Compiled By Kurt Bier

#9 Top Carnaval Performers

I work as a computer game tester. The job is OK -- lots of free coffee and donuts, and except for having to stare at a computer screen for eight hours, there is little to complain about. Its massive drawback, though, is that it's located in Fremont, a city I'd never given much thought to and only knew existed because its name sometimes flashed on the BART sign.

Well, I now know intimately where Fremont is; every morning I spend an hour and a half commuting there on a hot, nasty freeway, bumper-to-bumper with Silicon Valley-bound vehicles, blinded by a blazing sun I can't escape, and accompanied by my carpool friend, a self-described "morning person" who sings show tunes and incessantly asks, "You're not asleep are you?"

At the end of this tortuous journey lies Fremont, a seemingly oasis of gentle Bay breezes and green hills. I like the hills the most. The lush, verdant, fertile mounds undulate into the horizon; their supple forms caress my eyes and lull me into a sensual stupor. As I gaze at their colorful slopes sprinkled with millions of wild flowers, each a tiny celebration of sweet, inspiring spring, I imagine the bees crawling into the flowers' inviting cups and along their jutting stamens, drenched in reproductive pollen dust, buzzing in ecstasy. Thousands of them float, drifting lazily from flower to flower until they finally return to the hive en masse to spew forth their sticky prizes into the collective honey pot. It's a veritable saturnalia of consumption, regurgitation, and commingling.

Saturnalia is a new word for me. I first heard it on an episode of *Murder She Wrote* and just got around to looking it up. Its Greek roots refer to a blow-out the Greeks use to have to honor the Saturn, the god of orgiastic revelry and licentiousness -- one happening mo-fo by all accounts.

During the Time of the Saturnalia, Greek men and women would slip out of their togas and into something more comfortable, gather at the Agora and for three days, eat, drink, sing, lube up, and writhe. Sound familiar? Me neither. I mean, the last time activity of this sort went on at a regional level was probably in the hills of Tennessee in the heyday of the hillbilly, and that included only family.

Our society fears open expressions of sexuality, especially those that involve more than one person and *especially* those that involve two or more members of the same gender. Our repression leaves people pent-up and easily excited. Any rebellion, even if it's not explicitly sexual, thus becomes a release of suppressed urges, which leads to weird shit like the Unabomber.

Geez Louise! What's up? What can we

do about this? Well, first of all, we can start loving each other and ourselves a little more. Good Vibrations has proclaimed May National Masturbation Month, so let's get on it -- or off it.

Second of all, an event is upon us that embodies liberation through song, dance, and eroticism. It properly recognizes spring as a fertile, joyous time. It's Carnaval! Two days of food, drink, music, and gyration. Organizers expect over 500,000 fun-seekers to swarm the Mission, ready to loose themselves prurient-like on our quiet streets.

The following list enumerates the acts most likely to surprise, delight, and rile. It was compiled with the help of the a man who has dedicated his life to making Carnaval a reality. Thanks Cee Cee.

1. Chalo Eduardo - Perhaps the best pandera and hand percussion player in the country. He jammed with Carlos Santana at the New Year's Midnight Surprise and has never missed a beat in his life.

2. Conceicao - Sidelined last year by pregnancy, she's back and better than ever. She exudes high energy.

3. Maria Souza - Ms. "Don't call me Black" Maria Souza, queen of last year's Carnival, returns to entertain with a unique blend of dance and physical poetry.

4. Carlos Aceitano - The leader of Foga Na Ropa, "clothes on fire," or "the internal fire," has participated in the Carnival for the last seven years. Champion of the Fogoistic style, his inimitable rhythms gather up everyone.

5. Beto Filo - From Bahia, the African center of Brazil, he's arguably the best dancer at Carnaval. He uses dream imagery in his act and can even put his foot behind his head.

6. Blanche Brown - Wife of Mayor Willie Brown and a big time player in the Mission dance scene, Brown will dance and instruct at the Third Wave Dance Studio.

7. Stephen d'Fireman Tiffenson - Always the winner of the unofficial award for Best King Costume, Tiffenson consults the best costume designers in the world. He travels throughout the world representing the San Francisco Carnaval.

8. Zenia - The most famous amateur of Carnaval and the person with the most time on television, perhaps due to her apparently perfect breasts. The wife of the owner of Valencia Cyclery.

9. Mestre Beisola - Former leader of Oba Oba and an accomplished Capoeirista, Beisola can play and do it all.

10. Cynthia Pierce - Star of Samba Da Caracao and pied piper of the carnival, Pierce teaches and choreographs at Buena Vista Elementary School. Her group of children invariably wins the award for Best Children's Group.

Blanche Brown: Carnaval Pioneer



Carnaval legend Blanche Brown performs. Photo by Eugene Kettner

by Stephanie Block

Carnaval is dance, pure and simple. Its queens and kings are the best dancers in the city, and to veteran participants like Blanche Brown, dance is life. Blanche Brown has been involved with San Francisco's Carnaval so long that she can remember its ancient days. She could tell you stories about how Carnaval used to be, in 1981, a small affair. The float that she won first prize for that year consisted of a bunch of musicians piled into the back of a pick-up truck with a generator, and the 40 attendants were all from her dance class.

To say that Carnaval has evolved since then is an understatement. But the way that it has evolved is purely San Franciscan. A fluid diversity puts a spin on the Brazilian party, turning it into a multicultural dance extravaganza with groups like the Haitian Somoans choreographing their own demonstrations. Contingency is more of a guideline than a rule. Take Blanche herself: a traditional Haitian dancer and the mayor's wife participating in a samba program this year as a female character that represents African religions.

Today, Blanche's Third Wave Dance Studio students probably wouldn't all fit into one pick-up truck. They are scattered throughout the Carnaval groups. Carnaval brings out a lot of people, which is

good for dance teachers because once you participate in some of the dance workshops, you often get hooked. After a passionate traditional Haitian performance by Group Petite la Croix, you might be moved to learn more about the dance.

That is what happened to Blanche. At 35, she decided to enroll in San Francisco State's dance program and fell in love with Haitian dance. And because her life revolves around dance, she was serious enough about it to look beyond the dance into the culture and religion that inspires it, and eventually her spiritual and professional lives combined.

This year, Blanche is taking it easy. This Carnaval will be purely for fun. You won't see her with Petite La Croix. For once, she is going to let someone else do the choreography and deal with all the headaches. She likes the idea of starring in another group's production. But the samba group isn't as different from what she usually does as you might think. While Brazilian and Haitian dances have different rhythms, all of the moves are African derived, and both owe a lot of their inspirations to strong religious bases.

Blanche didn't dance last year either. Instead, she served as a parade judge. But next year it will be business as usual; she plans to dance once again with her traditional Haitian troupe.

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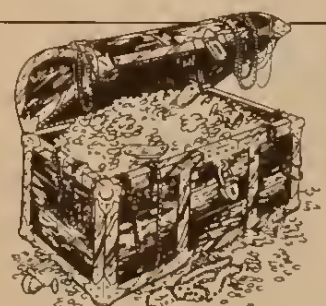
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Carnaval: A Long And Winding 17-Year Dance

by Kurt Bier

Seventeen years ago, on a gray, blustery winter day, 2000 people gathered in Precita Park to witness a genuinely unique event. While the wind tussled their hair and chapped their lips, they stood and watched as hundreds of fantastically clad performers boogied by them, moving fluidly to incessant and driving rhythms. When it was over, most left shaking their heads. "Cool," they said. A bit of something different had found its way to the city by the bay. It was the beginning of something grand. It was the beginning of Carnaval.

Seventeen years later, half a million people will swarm the Mission District of San Francisco to be part of the 16th reincarnation of the original San Francisco Carnaval, a now massive festival that for two days transforms the Mission into the "where it's at" on the west coast. Thousands of dancers, musicians, artists, costume designers, and float makers from the city and from around the world will concentrate their talents to produce the best Carnaval outside of Brazil. All right, maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration, but it's sure to be real, real good.

But who did this? Who had the audacity to think they could plant such a seed? Here follows a brief history of San Francisco's Carnaval as told by its founder and some of the companies involved from the get-go -- or at least for a long time.

Marcus Gordon and Adela Chu did it. Dancers and drummers both, the Carnaval spirit coursed through their veins. They decided to give it a whirl and were pleasantly surprised by the strong response they received from local performing companies. The next year they moved the parade to the Mission, using up all and more of the half of Mission Street they were allotted as they made their way to Dolores Park. Local law enforcement

groused at the disruption Carnaval caused, but as the crowds grew larger, city officials saw dollar signs and it's been cooperation ever since. In 1981, '82, and '83, the parade and festival moved to the Civic Center, a cheerless place according to most.

There was no parade in 1984. "We were just burned out," explained Mr. Gordon. The Mission Economic Cultural Association (MECA) took over the operation in 1985, moved the celebration back to the Mission, and has kept the fun coming ever since then. Mr. Gordon remains, of course, the Carnaval's artistic director and sees many a festival in his future.

One of the groups with a long history of Carnaval involvement is Escola Nova De Samba. A Brazilian samba group, they first participated in 1981. Chalo Edwardo, a fundamental player in the San Francisco dance and drum scene, heads the school with Josephine Morado. They remember well each and every hectic moment. When the parade was canceled in 1984 they took matters into their own hands. "We hooked up with Theater Artaud," she told the *New Mission News*, "made the stage look like Mission Street, and had our own Carnival."

In 1988 and '89 they were the Grand Champions of Carnaval. They weren't quite as regal as they were two years ago when their float, a replica of the Golden Gate Bridge, got lost trying to find the Mission. Arriving just 20 minutes before the start of the parade, the float still had workers dangling from its sides adding the final touches. During the 1990 parade, a hot and sultry one by all accounts, a sudden, torrential rainfall drenched all the participants except for ENDS who had just crossed the finish line. An act of providence, they say.

Mary Dollar remembers the same rainstorm. She and her husband Fernando de Sanhines direct Sambao Do



Photo by Bruce Dantker

Coracao, a group descended from ENDS. Ms. Dollar recited their motto for this year: "Less stress, more fun, more spirit." Many groups are emphasizing the "less stress" motto.

As Carnaval has grown in size and prestige, so has the competition between groups for the Grand Prize Carnaval Awards. Some say that takes a bit of the fun out of it. One of Ms. Dollar's most memorable parades was their first as SDC. Their theme that year was Mother Earth, Drums of Thunder, Dances of the Rain, and apparently whenever they sang the rain part a gentle sprinkle would fall atop their heads (who knows).

Fogo Na Roupa's theme this year is

Firebird, a tribute to a tragedy that ironically brought the company to life. At the 1990 Carnaval, Carlos Aceituno waited, along with the other member of Bloco Dos Amigos, for their director Andy Davila to show up for the parade. When he didn't, Carlos stepped in and lead the group through Carnaval. The company earned the award for best dance group. Their elation quickly became grief, though, when Mr. Davila's body was found on Mt. Tam. Carlos went on to found Fogo Na Roupa and create his own style of dance called fogolystic.

This is Carnaval: Death, birth, life, joy. Let the spirit of it move you as it does so many others.

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1996 Carnaval King and Queen

by Stephanie Block

You've heard of Jeckyl and Hyde, Clark Kent and Superman, but let me tell you about Mercedes Stubbs. When I met him, he was impeccably dressed in a tasteful, conservative suit, and his wire-rimmed glasses attested to his polite manner. But it wasn't until he revealed the pictures of himself dressed in his winning Carnaval costume that I realized what I was dealing with.

There was this unassuming man in a bright red ostrich feather, rhinestoned bodysuit unzipped to his stomach, and his chin tilted high in the air as if to say "I am fabulous." Mercedes Stubbs is 1996's Carnaval king. Silvana Sousa is the queen. And between Mercedes's outrageousness and Silvana's outrageous gorgeousness, this should be a Carnaval to remember.

Mercedes had no doubt in his mind that the kingship was his calling. In 1992, he won Sweet Jimmy's Budweiser Best Dancer of the Year award, beating M.C. Hammer in the process. In 1993, he tried out for the Carnaval King title and lost, but the judges remembered him and sent him the application to try out again this year.

In the early '80s, if you ever spent any time at Pier 41, you would have run into young Mercedes breakdancing for nickles and pennies. Breakdancing gave him his first taste of fame when Pioneer Chicken held a breakdancing contest that Mercedes took by storm, landing a role in the movie, Breaking Two: Electric Boogaloo. He also danced in the movie Beat Street. Before he came to California, our king danced the seven seas for two years on a Caribbean cruise line teaching jazz and aerobics. Before that, it was cabaret in Las Vegas. So you can see that Mercedes has a lot to bring to the crown.

He is a prolific dancer. His style today is a mixture of many different influences, which he feels enables everyone to relate

to him. Some of his moves are Afrodesian and include elements from Kenya and Nigeria. These combine with samba, salsa, and reggae to create a dazzling and charismatic performance. His style is original, creative, free-thinking. Because Mercedes is strictly freelance, you won't find his name on the permanent lists of any one company -- unlike Silvana, whose queenship is not only a reflection of her skill and personality but of her company's as well.

When he isn't giving red hot performances on stage, Mercedes actually douses fires for the Red Cross. He helped to put out the Oakland fires. He is also a part-time student studying cutlery as well as architectural engineering. His main job is construction work, which is something else that I can't imagine this dapper side of Mercedes doing.


What Mercedes believes sets him apart from his competition is his grandiosity. "This is the most grand king you'll ever see," he told me. "You're natural number one king, Mercedes."

This king has the soul of an entertainer. A lot of what he talked to me about was what he could bring to an audience: joy, a love for dance, and something to remember. His hand made costume alone should give people enough to talk about for weeks on end. Was the artist thinking of Mercedes when he chose the ostrich and peacock feathers? The ostrich who stands alone, what Mercedes called an original bird that goes out and shows off, and the peacock who is in every respect the man adored?

If Mercedes is the man adored, Silvana is the queen from the adored dance company. Last year's queen, Maria Amabelis Souza, was also from the Samba Aquerella. Silvana is no queen bee, though. She is more of an early bird. She gets up at 4:30 every morning and works until six at night.



Carnaval King Mercedes Stubbs Photo by Eugene Kettner



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Carnaval Queen Silvana Sousa Photo by Bruce Dantzker



ROUND WORLD MUSIC REVIEW

by Robert Leaver

The Music Of Carnaval

BACCHANAL TIME

Carnaval time is here again and that means one big party in the Mission. The tradition of Carnaval as it is celebrated here in the Americas goes back at least to the early part of this century. It is celebrated in February (a month too cold to have an outdoor event in San Francisco) the week before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent when people are supposed to be on their best behavior and in a state of self-denial. The celebration of Carnaval is strongest in the Caribbean and Brazil -- in countries with large African descended populations.

For Africans here in the Americas it was one time when they could openly and publicly sing, play drums, dance and essentially "free up." In Brazil, for example, Carnaval began in the nineteenth century with European descended Brazilians dressing up in costume, parading, and partying; as this occasion grew in fame all Brazilians came to take part in the celebration. Afro-Brazilians would mock the white Brazilians, especially the politicians and the rich. Almost anything was allowed and the descendants of Africa used this occasion to make their voice heard through music and dance. Attempts were made to suppress their participation but the event had become too large to control and censor.

Similar development can be found in the Caribbean. Perhaps the country most associated with Carnaval is Trinidad and Tobago, where calypso music was born out of the rebellious spirit of Carnaval. The calypsonians competed fiercely for

the top honors, and no subject was taboo. Risque songs full of sexual double-entendre became familiar to everyone. Soca grew out of calypso as a faster style with a heavier beat and today in Trinidad as throughout the entire Caribbean, "ragga," or reggae dancehall vocal stylings and beats are mixed into the musical brew of soca.

In cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, and Port-au-Prince, Haiti carnival transforms everything into a primal, anarchic, and jubilant frenzy. People spend months saving for and preparing their costumes. The Carnaval groups start organizing and practicing months before. The grass roots efforts of people in their neighborhoods is what makes Carnaval. A pauper can be a prince, a maid a princess -- any fantasy can be indulged and any thought can be voiced.

Carnival has now become a major event in North America in the cities with large Caribbean populations like Toronto and New York City. Here in San Francisco our Carnaval is now included as one of the major ones. Our carnaval has its own unique flavor, for in addition to Soca and Samba groups there are also Mexican, Peruvian, Salvadorean, Nicaraguan, Native American and freak contingents. The parade on Sunday, May 26 will feature maybe a hundred groups and last for hours. It is the most inclusive celebration we have and there's a place for everyone, including spectator.

On May 25 and 26 there will be a street fair on Harrison from 16th to 21st Streets



starting around noon and lasting until 6 p.m. On either end will be stages with groups performing the entire time. Saturday will feature some of our great Latin talent on the 21st Street stage including Avance, Charanson, Cana Roja, and Mission Project while the 16th Street stage will have Junglz Apart and Al Rapone & the Zydeco Express. Sunday promises to be truly stunning with the 16th Street stage showing the great Congloles dance group, Fua Dia Congo, steel pan group Pan

Ramjay and master pan maestro from Trinidad Len "Boogsie" Sharp, and the one and only Calypso Rose headlining at 4:45. Meanwhile the 21st Street stage will laying down some heavy salsa on Sunday with our local Cuban maestros, Conjunto Cespedes, and from New York City the great group Manny Oquendo & Conjunto Libre, who will also be playing at Bimbo's Friday, May 25, as they record a live album.

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ONCE UPON A SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM A PEOPLE OF ALL ANCESTORS TRIED TO
FIND A WAY TO LIVE IN PARADISE AS ONE.

The dark Queen Califa beheaded and slain
By patriarchal will to dominate nature and gain
Her task lives on through her mask

From her blood touching the seashore comes might
Pegasus, the great winged medium of flight
The means to pursue your highest dreams

As the twilight of the 5th age clouds the soul's future
Twentieth century man, hypnotized by power, is lost unless he can nurture
The gods of glory and wealth have captured the muses of song, dance and story

People hypnotized by machines and pretenders
Sparks of humor found between belief and despair rarely rendered
The muses nine long for a carnival reunion with their children's line
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

One early spring day the mask speaks, Muses of the central peak
The world soul's cycle shows a terminal twenty-twelve heart attack
Hourglass of past present future will clog at the midpoint since vision lacked

Find your fountain's mount, Pegasus, a well tempered pilot
One fit by virtue of deeds to face the fires of the seven sins and remain unlit
While muses labor on new sound and light for the May Day they pray for a white knight

A whole Apollo who has not denied his shadow Bacchus
Pegasus the mighty steed will miss unless ridden with a soulful kiss
Paris, a percussionist by passion, had just said yes plenty, but still longed for bliss

Paris rides Pegasus like a surfboard on beams of light
A chilling thrill where past and future merge to complete insight
Paris' music with melody and rhythm preserves order or he'd flee

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

The reality beyond this world is ruled by rhythmic fairies
Scientists now can only measure, old Mayan's knew cyclic truth and beauty
To influence these subtle energy patterns, you must dance until you're a lantern

Around early April, the muses are discussing the Great Pyramid tetraktys treasure doors
Mathematics is the universal language of the cosmos and prophesy lore
Rhythms are threes and fours while egos want their fives to score more

An excited Paris summoned Pegasus, instantly they came to the Great Pyramid:
"Allow me to introduce your dream" said a regally dressed monkey hid beneath a lid
"Humanity is to exit the womb of Mother Earth for an unknown birth

"Paris, you have been chosen to break, I mean ride on through to the other side
"The hour is late, for your big date. I am Thoth, the great grand trickster, guide and mentor
"Here lie three crystal pyramids, know their sides and points; six-eight, five-five & four-four"

"No lie, guy" Paris responded before Thoth cut him off sharply.
"Your late waits, be ready on Trinity Sunday to choose your third eye. Be ready, Eddy"
"That's not my name pointy-hat, and while I love to help you I've got to play surdo in the grand
parade that day. Please to meet you. Hope you guess my name. Now Pegasus say good-bye to the nice
monkey."

But unlike his usual fast-disc surling none of the three liquors left the Egyptian desert.
Thoth spoke slowly and patiently, "You have little time to learn the lessons of travel in the
world beyond visible reality but let me give you lesson one. What goes around comes around.
"I know that, you sow what you reap. It's the golden rule or all cultures" muttered Paris
"My friend, you've only been having fun with the muses. Please learn their lessons and temper
your passions, Remember good fortune happens because opportunity and preparation coincide. In other
words, don't blow it, let it flow." said Thoth as he and the three critical crystals slowly vanished.
Beluddled, Paris soon found himself at the spring of the nine muses on Liberty Hill.

Paris's center was his faith and love for the mistress behind the muses mask
Queen Califa, grant me the wisdom of the past that its rebirth will nourish my spiritual task
That I should let my soul show the goal of great waves of love and harmony without toll

A favorite muse was Thalia whose joyful laughter taught Paris to be coy
Suddenly, Paris abruptly rose to say, "Humanity may perish without this boy from Troy
We must act together with all the gods, to align ourselves with the potential for joy
Great architect forgive my trespasses and allow me your truth and goodness, so dear
The tetraktys treasure is a symmetry gear of the universe expanding ever outward yet near
May the brothers three Apollo, Bacchus and Jovial calm my fear and guide my cheer

Triple Goddess of faith, hope and charity, muses of memory nine
Sacred sagas in song and movement, inspiration, sweet water of the vine
Come forth misses, and stir up a Carnival fire to launch your Pegasus and Paris

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Attend muses to my sacred song
And learn what rites to sacrifice belong
I invoke the earth, solar light, the moon's pure splendor, and stars of nights

Come Pegasus, blessed power of dreams divine
Angel of future fates, swift wings are thine
Sacred and pure mind be true to one so inclined

Come forward with one voice. All nation's time to rejoice
Great fountain of form seek unity from diversity
And from these powerful rites will flow great delights

Dancers fly, colors dominate, captivate
Let the beat put you under its spell, yes we vibrate
Break all bonds of oppression, be fair and we will become one with air

In the middle of the Carnival parade, near the grandstands at the central crossroads the
percussion bateria often hits its unified peak. Paris, beat his surdo with the base pattern around which all
the other rhythms flowed. Thoth appeared to Paris and no one else. "It's time we must be going. We must
be going it's time. Choose wisely from these three guiding lights.

As Paris beat his large deep surdo, images of cultures past-present-future projected themselves
onto a familiar spinning Egyptian pyramid made up of four triangles and a square which gradually
morphed into a Mayan pyramid, its tip replaced with a ceremonial platform, somewhat like the one on the
back of a US dollar bill. Before too long a final transformation gave way to a perfectly balanced shape of
four equilateral triangles capable of spinning gracefully in any direction. A tetrahedron pyramid
symbolized perfect unity thought Paris. With a start Paris proclaimed, "I pick four x three".

Adrenaline pumps, tunnel of chaos, shriek of terror
Pegasus Pegasus!, the dream has come to stalk, Apotheosis may be an error
This one with the gods thing, they throw cabbages at kings!

In his ear he heard Thoth, "Focus inward on the beat of the flow"
Yo Ho, Yo Ho, Mo Go, Go Mo, Let my surdo grow
Carnaval Grand Parade what it's meant, joyous soul of the people, fuel my assent

Integrated Mayan Trinitune warp, hourglass of the fifth age will no longer run
Crystal kaleidoscope let our light flow through to the sixth sun
From reverie to revelry, We believe in hope and the unity of the trinity

Pegasus put his engines into reverse as a black hole began sucking
Paris knew his cue and dived for the center grabbing his horse's bridle and crystal
Bloody mystery dance, opposites unite at the center, harmonic soul convergence chance

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

The parade had ended, twilight was setting behind the hourglass shaped Mt. Sutro Tower high
above the Inner Mission parade route as Paris came to full consciousness. As he contemplated the faintly
lit log surrounding the trinity structured tower at the center of the twelve San Francisco Bay Area
counties, Paris wondered if anyone else in his contingent had dreams like his. "Only together as one can
my dream become reality" he thought to himself, "Next year we'll share the caring mo bettah."

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Happy Carnival



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Urban Gardening

by Elizabeth Platt



May is prime time to plant summer vegetables, especially tomatoes and sweet corn. It's the only month where you can attempt to grow melons and eggplant -- emphasis on "attempt," as most varieties need both hot days and warm nights to do well. Look for extra-early or cool-tolerant varieties if you're willing to take a chance. If you're going to grow tomatoes, eggplant, or peppers, buy transplants (a.k.a. "sets"), not seeds; germination takes too long and is too erratic to get good results in time for planting.

Ignore the "wisdom" that only the "San Francisco Fog" variety of tomato will grow in these parts -- it's said to have lousy flavor, and anyway, my garden has produced good crops of several heirloom tomatoes, including Brandywine and Prudens Purple. If you're uncertain about how well tomatoes will do in your garden, try sticking to early varieties such as Oregon Spring, and smaller-fruited varieties -- don't try to grow beefsteak tomatoes! Stupice and Early Girl also do well and are carried by many garden centers. Cherry tomatoes are always a cinch to grow; they produce like crazy.

Don't be daunted by the indeterminate/determinate classifications of tomatoes. Many tomatoes are indeterminate -- that is, they grow and fruit continuously until they die. If you plant any of this type, be prepared to stake or trellis them properly. Indeterminate types have more compact growth, tend to produce their crop within a limited time, then cease production. They usually do need some staking or support, especially when they're full of ripening fruit, but nothing as elaborate as with indeterminate types.

Sweet corn should be planted in blocks for best pollination. Try early and mid-season varieties, especially the "sugary enhanced" or "SE" types. Only experienced gardeners should try the "SH2" or "supersweet" sweet corns, as they need to be isolated. Make use of the floor space at the base of the corn stalks by planting squash or pumpkins to sprawl around, or beans to grow up the stalks.

By the way, you don't need to go too far afield to find seeds and supplies for your garden. Rainbow Grocery, Yahoo Herb'an Ecology, and Cole Hardware at Mission and 29th all sell seeds and garden supplies. Tip: many whole, clean, dried beans sold at health food stores can be used as garden seed -- all my fava beans have been grown from Rainbow's bulk food section!

One final reminder: All of these veggies are "thirsty" plants that require regular and consistent irrigation through our dry season to produce well.

From Transplants:

Bitter Melon. Broccoli. Celery.

Eggplant: Look for smaller-fruited varieties (e.g., Japanese eggplant) for best results.

Tomato: Early and mid-season varieties do best; late-season varieties may not ripen as well.

Peppers: Jalapenos and bell peppers.

Sorrel (French or Garden): Usually classed as a perennial herb; one plant should suit your kitchen garden just fine.

From Seed:

(Note: many of these can be grown as transplants to set out in the garden at a later date. However, unlike those listed above, the following can be sown now, either directly in the ground or as transplants, depending on the cultivation needs of each particular plant.)

Amaranth. Asparagus Pea (or Winged Pea)

Beans: All types, including bush and pole varieties, snap beans, scarlet runner beans. One exception: Summer is usually too hot for fava beans, though they might do OK in a cooler part of your garden.

Beets.

Broccoli: Seed short-season types for transplanting next month for fall harvest.

Brussels Sprouts: Seed short-season types for transplanting next month for fall harvest.

Cabbage. Carrots. Celeriac.

(Sweet) Corn: Early or mid-season varieties do best. Cucumbers: Many people prefer to put out sets, but these can be done from seed, too.

Gourds: Try smaller-fruited varieties to ensure proper ripening.

Greens (including lettuce): Look for hot-weather varieties that are resistant to bolting (going to seed). Try growing greens in a cooler spot, such as light partial shade, or where they will be shaded by taller crops around it. Some greens, such as amaranth and New Zealand Spinach, hold up better in hot weather.

Ground Cherry (or Cape Gooseberry, Husk Tomato): For harvest next spring.

Melons. New Zealand Spinach. Parsnips. Potatoes. Pumpkins.

Radish: Small or salad varieties, Salsify (Oyster Plant).

Spinach: Look for heat-tolerant/bolt-resistant varieties.

Summer Squash. Winter Squash. Sunflowers. Sweet Potato (from starts/slips).

Swiss Chard: Try growing in partial or light shade (hot weather tends to stunt), tomatillo (seeds or plants).

Turnips. Winter Melon (seeds or plants).



COLLINS' CORNER SCHOOL NEWS

By Rick Collins

Students Find Toxins At Horace Mann

On April 17, Horace Mann Middle School had its first ever toxic test challenge. This particular night belonged to the eighth graders. They had displays and information on four main topics: Radon, Lead, Pesticides, and Indoor Air Quality (IAQ).

Eighth grade science teacher Monica Goulart initiated the challenge after she attended a convention hosted by the American Lung Association. "The purpose of the challenge is for us to find out how much of each pollutant is in the air and to see what role it plays in the air," she said.

The eighth graders did their assignments in and around Horace Mann Middle School, and found that radon was formed from the disintegration of radium. They discovered that radon was the only toxin that they did not have. Radon gas is known to be the nation's second leading cause of lung cancer. It is estimated that between 7,000 to 30,000 radon gas-related deaths occur every year.

The students found high levels of lead due to chipping paint. Russell McDougall, 14, said, "since almost all the paint in the school is chipping, we are exposed to high levels of lead. Lead can also be found in soil. Paint chips are picked up by the wind and some will be deposited in the soil. Leaded gasoline can also be a factor in the pollution of the ground. Car exhaust fumes also contain a high level of lead."

Children are more susceptible than adults to lead poisoning because they might eat paint chips or get the polluted soil on their hands. Lead poisoning is chronic and can cause abdominal pain,

muscle pain, anemia, and nerve and brain damage.

After taking several studies of their IAQ, the students found horrible results including asbestos, dusty air, leaky pipes, and moldy walls. Goulart said, "problems with air filters can contribute to bad results with the IAQ." Sure enough, Horace Mann's air filters are clogged and need to be replaced.

Bad IAQ mostly occurs when buildings are sealed up tightly, especially in the winter. Some factors that affect IAQ are: heating, ventilation, air conditioning, pollution pathways, and occupants. Some pollutants that make it into the building are dust, pollen, and fungal spores.

"By the end of each year at least 250 lives are taken because of bad I.A.Q." The people most at risk are the elderly, pregnant women, and infants," said Dora Ajca, 14.

"We found that pesticides were used frequently," said Russell McDougall. Pesticides are used to combat weeds, bugs, rodents, and insects. But in the process of killing these pests, other innocent animals and plants are also killed. Humans are also hurt by pesticides, which lead to health problems and possible birth defects.

When asked what she was going to do with the information that the eighth graders attained, Goulart replied, "We're going to take the information down to the district and ask for help in clean up and repairs." She also hopes that people "will take the initiative in checking their homes and communities for these types of toxins."

Sister City Kids From Esteli Visit San Francisco

March 18 through March 24, three high school students from Esteli, Nicaragua visited San Francisco as part of the Sister City Program. San Francisco and Esteli became sister cities in 1991 so that there might be better communication between the U.S. and Nicaragua.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower started the Sister City Program after World War II to help nations get to know one another better and to lessen the threat of another world war.

The three Esteli students were chosen for their leadership skills and their commitment to their community. They are focusing on ending racial tension, keeping the lines of communication open between the diverse communities in our city, and finding positive ways to deal with the many challenges that teens endure. It is also their hope that teens in San Francisco will get involved with their communities.

The Esteli delegation paid a visit to Mission High School. There they met with Mission High's leadership group and discussed many topics. One in particular addressed the issues that people in both cities share, such as domestic and random violence, pressure to join gangs, and pres-

sure for kids to work and support their families financially instead of finishing their educations. Some of the problems that were more common with the people of Esteli were shortages of educational, medical, and recreational supplies.

The Esteli delegation's plans for this trip included meeting with community service agencies, neighborhood organizations, housing project residents, and community leaders. The mayor's office, the Board of Education, and numerous leaders and officials from other organizations were also working with them.

Before they left, I had chance to speak with the three. I asked how they were going to use the ideas and knowledge gained from this trip back home in Esteli. Sheyla Mabel Torres, 15, replied, "We are going to try and use some of the ideas we received here to solve some of our own problems." The entire group, she said, hoped that "leaders of institutions work together more often to solve problems."

Not only does the Sister City Program benefit people in other countries, but it also benefits people right here in San Francisco.

Rick Collins is a sophomore at Archbishop Riordan High School.

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KIRMIS

by Frank Stauf

As a little girl in Nazi Germany, my mother loved her grandfather, her Opa, more than she loved her own mother. Tall and stern, still vigorous at 57, thick white hair cropped short, he had a reputation in the neighborhood for never smiling -- but he always smiled for Marianne; he melted for her, listening with amused indulgence to her stories of the day's adventures when he came home from the chalk works, his clothes dusted white as his hair.

He spoiled her so much she thought he'd marry her someday and live with her forever in the big house on Siegersbusch. Since Marianne's Papa had left so long ago, the house seemed empty. The stables were empty. The house was much too big with only Marianne and her mother in it, but Opa's presence filled it.

Why did Papa leave? Her mother told her that was just what some men did -- they left. Not Opa, though; not even in the hungry time, before the Party, before Marianne was born, when he'd been forced to slaughter his own horses. He had loved those horses, but the neighbors were starving, and his daughter was starving, so he slaughtered the horses and divided the meat.

He was starving, too, but refused to eat any of the meat -- nor would he ever eat a bite of anything his daughter cooked in any pot or pan in which she'd cooked it, until at last she'd had to give away those perfectly good pots and pans. Telling Marianne the story, mother said she couldn't blame him for that after the way those horses had screamed...

His own death was equally horrible. The cancer in his throat wouldn't let him swallow food; he starved to death. His granddaughter imagined his screams were what the horses' screams had sounded like. When he was dead, she would not accept it. She convinced herself of his eventual return, which meant she really didn't have to mind her mother at

all, because Opa *always* took Marianne's side.

Marianne's new father, her mother's new husband, was a quiet, timid little man, too weak to be a soldier on either front. He remained a stranger and a disappointment to Marianne even in the closeness of the niche. By then, the British and American bombing raids had become so frequent that most of the families in the neighborhood had taken refuge in the railroad tunnel, living in the niches that lined the tunnel, hanging blankets in front of the niches for privacy.

As explosions thudded overhead like a giant's footsteps, and stepfather smoked nervously, Marianne's patient mother braided her daughter's hair in the dark, trying to get her to hold still with stories of Kirmis. As soon as the war was over, there would be a Kirmis with a big, big tent, and colored lights, and music, and plenty of sweet things to eat. Marianne was hungry enough to eat anything -- almost. Would there be horses at the Kirmis? Yes, there would be beautiful, proud horses.

Marianne imagined Opa, beautiful and proud, dusted white, riding from the Kirmis tent to meet her...

For days after the last bomb fell, the people remained huddled in the dark, fearful of American invaders until hunger (and the Americans' promise of food) drove them out into the light. It was Mother's Day, May 1945. The men -- mostly old men and boys -- went bravely on ahead; the women and children followed shortly up the steep embankment from the railroad tracks. Marianne held fast to her mother's hand, letting herself be pulled up and over the embankment to a meadow sprinkled with wildflowers. She tried to struggle free when she saw the big green tent pitched in the middle of the meadow -- "Kirmis! Kirmis!"

Men in strange green uniforms with guns stood near the tent: the mythical Amerikaners. Most of the men from the



tunnel had already filed into the tent; there seemed to be some sort of commotion going on inside. Marianne could hardly stand it. Why was everyone so grim, so quiet? Why didn't Opa ride out of the tent and sweep her up into his arms and ride away with her?

The huge brown head surprised her, tearing through a flap in the tent. It screamed and rolled its big white eyes, red foam spraying from its mouth and nostrils, lips drawn back from yellow teeth. Then the massive neck appeared, bleeding from a great red gash, and then the body of the horse broke free of the tent in a sick, stumbling gallop with the pale men from the tunnel lurching after it.

Some of the Americans laughed. Some of the tunnel men held knives; Marianne's stepfather among them. They moved so strangely, like a silent movie -- all so silent but for the scream of the horse

as it fell in the field, as they descended on it with their knives to stab it in the throat and drown it in its own life's blood.

The meat was butchered, parceled out, and after Marianne's mother had cooked their share of it at home -- back in the bombed-out remnant of the Siegersbusch house, whose kitchen was more or less intact -- it came as no surprise to anyone that Marianne turned her nose up at the meat.

"You eat," her mother said, and meant it.

Marianne obeyed, pretending she didn't want to, but the hunger in her belly was so big that she was secretly grateful to her mother. Once the food was in her mouth, she couldn't help but chew it up with whimpers of delight.

Happy Mother's Day.

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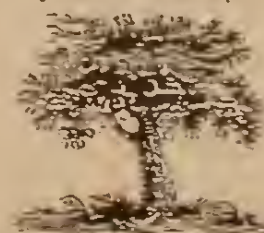
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